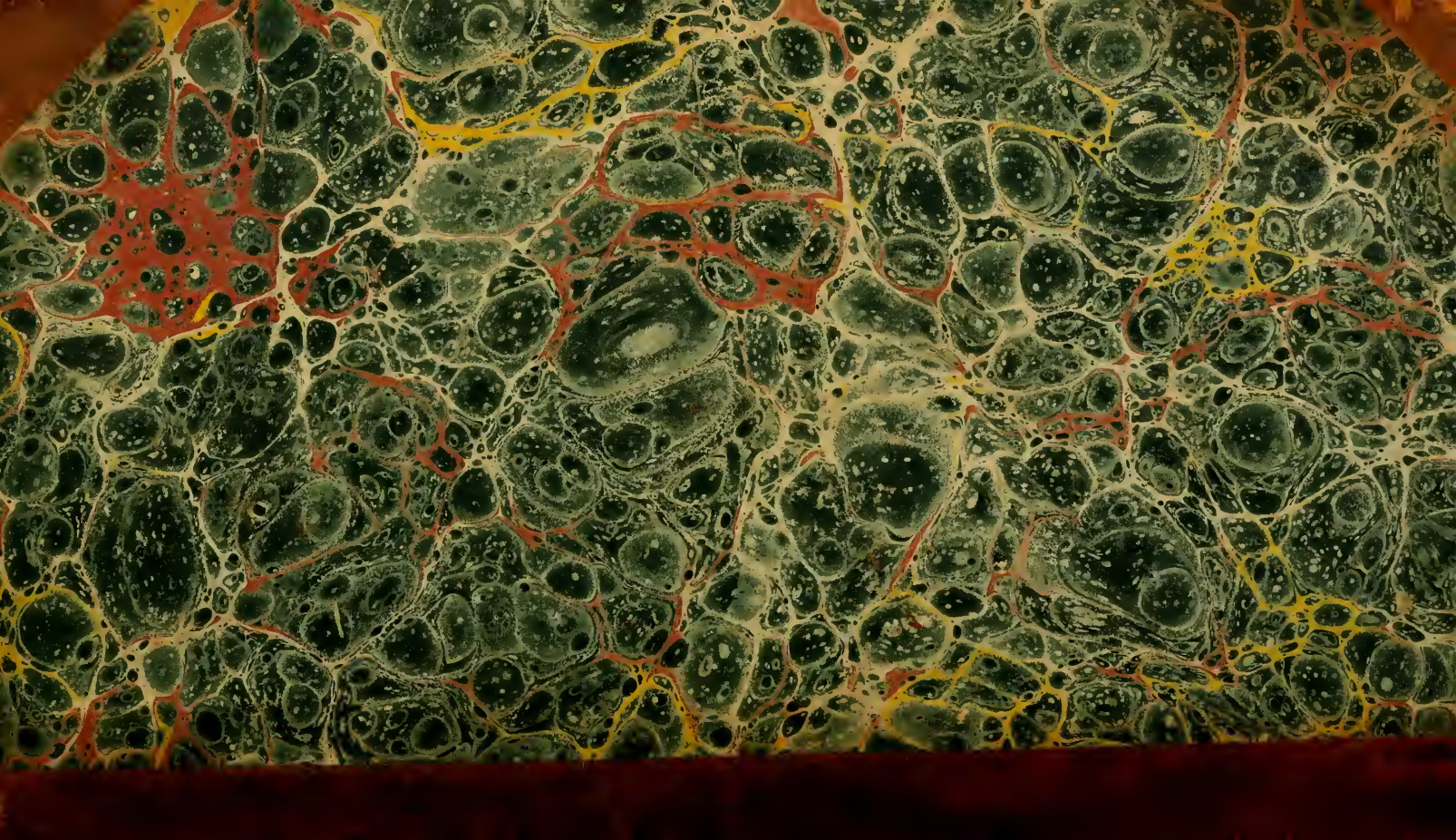

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. ANDREW FULLER,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

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EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES

ON

THE APOCALYPSE,

INTERSPERSED WITH

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

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TO THE

BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST

AT KETTERING.

Dear Brethren,

It is at your request that these discourses appear in print. When in the course of exposition I first entered on them, it was not from an idea that I at that time sufficiently understood the prophecy, but from a hope that by this means I might understand it better. And now that I have ventured to publish, it is not because I am fully satisfied of having given the true meaning in every instance. There are parts in which I can only say, I have done the best I could. If, however, I had not been satisfied as to the general meaning of the prophecy, or had been conscious of having thrown no new light upon it, I should have felt it to be my duty to withhold my papers from the public eye.

Observing the blessing pronounced on "him that readeth, and on them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein," I had a desire to enter

upon it, accompanied, I think, with some sense of my dependence upon the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. The reason also assigned why we should study this part of the Holy Scriptures in particular—that "the time is at hand," seemed to have greater force after a lapse of above seventeen hundred years, than it could have at the time of its being written. I conceived also that the events of the present times, though we should beware of illusive hypotheses founded upon them, yet called for a special attention to prophecy. They might also be expected to throw some light upon it. Some late writers upon the subject appear to understand many things which earlier ones did not; and there is reason to expect that prophecy will be understood much better in years to come than it is at present.

The method I pursued was, first to read it carefully over, and as I went on, to note down what first struck me as the meaning. After reducing these notes into something like a scheme of the prophecy, I examined the best expositors I could procure, and comparing my own first thoughts with theirs, was better able to judge of their justness. Some of them were confirmed, some corrected, and many added to them.

I have dealt but little in quotations, refusing nothing however from any writer which appeared to me to be just. And as to what appeared otherwise, I have generally passed it over without attempting to refute it; as being rather desirous of giving the true meaning, than of proving that other men's opinions were founded in mistake.

The exposition of a prophecy, delivered in symbolical language, must be liable to many mistakes. A style so highly figurative furnishes great scope for the imagination, which, unless it be accompanied with a sober and just judgment, will lead us into labyrinths of error. How far I have been enabled to avoid them, and to succeed in throwing light upon any part of the prophecy, it is not for me to decide. This I know, my object has been to obtain its true meaning, and to communicate it in a manner suited, not to the curious, but to the Christian reader.

The manuscript has lien by me between four and five years, during which I have frequently re-examined its contents, and availed myself of any farther light which by reading or reflection has appeared on the subject. During this period several of our most highly esteemed friends, who joined in the request, are gone the way of all the earth. We shall soon follow them. We have seen enough, amidst all the troubles of our times, to gladden our hearts; and trust that our children will see greater things than these.

I am,

Your affectionate Pastor,

ANDREW FULLER.

Kettering, March 21, 1815.

SCHEME OF THE PROPHECY.

THE addresses to the seven churches are applicable to all other churches in similar circumstances, in all ages, but not prophetic—The things which the apostle was commanded to write being those which *he had seen*, those which *were*, and those which *should be hereafter*, prove that the prophecy commences, not from the time of the vision, but probably from the ascension of Christ, in like manner as the four monarchies of Daniel commenced from the rising up of the Babylonish empire, many years before the time of the vision . . . . . Chapters i—iii.

The book of SEVEN SEALS contains the whole of the prophecy, the trumpets being only a subdivision of the seventh seal, and the vials of the seventh trumpet . . . . . Chapters iv, v.

The opening of the *first seal*,—on which appeared "a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer"—represents the great progress of the gospel in the apostolic age . . . . . Chapter vi. 1, 2.

The opening of the *second seal*—on which there appeared "a red horse, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another,"—signifies the wars between the Jews and the Romans, who had united in persecuting Christ and his followers . . . . . Chapter vi. 3, 4.

The opening of the *third seal*—on which there appeared "a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand, &c."—denotes a famine, or scarcity approaching to famine, in which the necessaries of life would be required to be weighed out with the utmost care, and which was fulfilled during the reigns of the *Antonines* Chap. vi. 5, 6.

The opening of the *fourth seal*—on which there appeared "a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed,"—signifies great mortality, owing to the intrigues and intestine wars in the empire, between the years 193 and 270, which produced famine and pestilence, and by diminishing the number of men gave ascendancy to the beasts of prey . . . . . Chap. vi. 7, 8.

The *fifth seal* was opened, on which were seen "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest [or wait] yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This seal represents the state of the church about the year 270, when it had endured nine out of ten of the heathen persecutions, and was about to endure the tenth under Dioclesian and Maximian, after which God would avenge their cause, by an utter overthrow of their persecutors . Chap. vi. 9—11.

The opening of the *sixth seal*—on which appeared "an earthquake," and as it were a day of judgment,—signified the revolution of Constantine when the pagan empire was overthrown, and the prayers of the souls under the altar were answered . . . . . Chap. vi. 12—17.

The "sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads," portends danger to the spiritual interests of the church from its outward prosperity, and distinguishes the faithful from the crowd of nominal Christians that would now be pressing into it . . . . . Chap. vii. 1—8.

This chapter concludes with a vision of the martyrs who had overcome, serving to strengthen the servants of God to encounter new trials.
Chap. vii. 9—17.

The *seventh seal* is opened—A solemn pause ensues—It is then subdivided into SEVEN TRUMPETS, which are put into the hands of seven angels; and the sounding of them is prefaced by "another angel's offering up the prayers of the saints with much incense, filling his censer with fire,

and casting it into the earth, denoting that the judgments to be brought by the trumpets would be in answer to their prayers . Chap. viii. 1—5.

The sounding of the *first four trumpets*, which affect "the earth, the sea, the fountains of waters, and the sun, moon, and stars," denote the *continental*, the *maritime*, and the *mountainous* parts of the empire, by the invasion of the northern nations, the issue of which was the eclipse of the *government*, supreme and subordinate. As the seals overthrew the pagan empire, these overthrew the Christian . . . Chap. viii. 6—12.

The sounding of the *fifth*, or *first woe-trumpet*, on which followed "smoke from the bottomless pit, and locusts," represents popery as filling the world with infernal darkness, and thus preparing the way for Mahometan delusion and depredation . . . . . Chap. ix. 1—12.

The *sixth*, or *second woe-trumpet*, is complex, relating partly to the "loosing of the four angels in Euphrates," followed by "an army of horsemen," and partly to the conduct of "the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues,"—the first denoting the rise and ravages of the Turks, by whom the eastern empire, and with it the Greek church, were overthrown; and the last, the idolatries and cruelties of the members of the western church, who, instead of taking warning from the fate of the eastern, repented not, but persisted in corrupting the religion of Jesus Christ, and in persecuting his witnesses.

Chap. ix. 20, 21. to Chap. xi. 14.

The vision of the angel with "a little book open," whose cry was followed by "seven thunders," refers to the Western, or papal church, which the prophecy now goes some ages back to take up, and which occupies the whole of what follows, till the beast and the false prophet are taken, or down to the times of the Millennium. The "thunders" may probably refer to the same things in the form of a general threatening, which are afterwards particularly disclosed under the vials: for it appears to be of their execution that the angel swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be *no delay;* but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, (that is, in the times of the pouring out of the vials) the mystery of God should be finished." This accounts for the command "not to write them," as they would be particularized under the vials . . . . . Chap. x.

The eleventh and three following chapters are considered as *three general descriptions* of the false church, chiefly under the 1260 years of antichristian usurpation, together with the state of the true church during the same period. These general descriptions of course are not confined to the times of this or that trumpet, but comprehend those of the greater part of the trumpets.

The *first general description*, contained in the eleventh chapter, denominates the false church "gentiles," and the true church "witnesses," who bear testimony against them. It leaves out of "the temple of God" the place occupied by the former. It represents, by the "slaughter of the witnesses," the prevalence of the antichristian party; by their "resurrection and ascension to heaven," the protestant reformation; and by the "earthquake," in which a tenth part of the city fell, (and which, by the way, marks the termination of the sixth, or second woe-trumpet) the late revolution in France. By the sounding of the seventh angel, a signal is given of the progress of the gospel. And by the song of the heavenly choir, are intimated the judgments which should be inflicted on the antichristian party, and the Millennial glory that should follow . . . . . Chap. xi.

The *second general description*, contained in the twelfth chapter, represents the true church prior to the introduction of antichristian corruptions, as "clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." These corruptions originate in a third part of the stars of heaven being drawn from their orbits by the tail of the dragon, and cast upon the earth; or by the rulers of the church being seduced by the riches and honours of the Roman empire. The dragon having thus prevailed over a part of the Christian church, aims to devour the other. The true church fleeth into the wilderness, where she exists without legal protection or toleration, till the Reformation in the sixteenth century, when Michael fights her battles, and the dragon is cast down. Succeeding persecutions are the effect of his defeat.

Chap. xii.

The *third general description*, contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, represents "a beast rising out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, &c." signifying that secular government by which the false church has been all along supported—namely, The Roman empire under its last head, after it had been divided into ten independent kingdoms, each of which was a horn of the

beast. When paganism was overthrown, the beast, in one of its heads was, "as it were, wounded to death;" but when Christianity became so corrupted as to be paganized, "the deadly wound was healed."

Chap. xiii. 1—16.

Another beast "rose out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, but who spake as a dragon"—denoting the hierarchy, or false church itself, which is cotemporary, and all along acts in concert with the first or secular beast . . . . . Chap. xiii. 11—18.

During the ravages of these beasts, and in opposition to them and their followers, appears "a Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, and with him 144,000, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. Their victory over antichristian error and corruption at the Reformation, is signified by "the voice of many waters, like thunder, and of harpers, harping with their harps." The spirit lately excited to carry the gospel to the heathen, is thought to be denoted by the evangelical "angel." The diminution and approaching dissolution of the antichristian power, is represented by "another angel following, and saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" And the danger of symbolizing and tampering with antichristianism is suggested by the solemn warnings of "a third angel." Then follows that of which the signal only had been given in the cry of the second angel—namely, the overthrow of Babylon, which is denoted by a harvest and a vintage . . . . . Chap. xiv.

Three general descriptions having been given, each of which carried us to the end of the 1260 years, the series of the prophecy, from the time of the sounding of the seventh, or third woe-trumpet, is now resumed. This trumpet wears a two-fold aspect: it is partly a woe-trumpet, and partly what may be called a jubilee-trumpet. In the first view, the SEVEN VIALS are a subdivision of it—in the last, it comprehends the Millennium, and all that follows to the end of the prophecy . Chap. xv.

The sounding of the seventh angel is the signal for the commencement of the pouring out of the vials, and is supposed to have taken place within the last five and twenty years. The vials are interpreted on the principle of their resemblance to the trumpets—namely, the *first*, poured out on the "earth," is supposed to denote the late wars on the continent between France and the other continental powers; the *second*, poured upon the "sea," the wars carrying on in the maritime nations of Spain and Portugal; the *third*, poured upon the "rivers and foun-

tains of water," the wars which, if the principle here adopted be just, will ere long befall Italy and Savoy, the countries where was shed in shocking profusion the blood of the Waldenses; the *fourth*, poured upon the "sun," the oppression of the supreme government to which the antichristian church will be subjected at the time; the *fifth*, poured on "the seat of the beast," such judgments as will either drive him from his den, or render him very miserable in it; the *sixth*, poured on "Euphrates," and producing the battle of "Armageddon," partly the overthrow of the Turkish empire, and partly the temporal ruin of the adherents of popery; the *seventh*, poured into the "air," the overthrow of the spiritual power of popery, and of every other species of false religion.

Chap. xvi.

The three following chapters are considered as *Notes of Illustration*, containing more particular accounts of several subjects which have been already introduced. In the first of them, (Chap. xvii.) the false church is described under the opprobrious name of "the great whore," and the powers which support her, under that of "a beast with seven heads and ten horns." This beast, namely, the Roman empire, "was, and is not, and yet is." When it was pagan, it existed with all its beastly properties; when it became Christian, it was supposed to have lost them, and to be a beast no longer; but by the corruptions introduced into Christianity, and which were supported by it, the beast still continued.

The "seven heads" of the beast have a two-fold application.—First, they are said to be "seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;" referring to the seven hills on which Rome, when in its full extent, is well known to have stood, and so pointing out the seat of the hierarchy. They are also said to be "seven kings," that is, governments, under which the empire had subsisted, did subsist, and would subsist hereafter. The forms under which it had subsisted, but which were passed away at the time of the commencement of the prophecy, were *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemvirs*, and *Military Tribunes;* the form under which it then subsisted was that of *Emperors;* and that which was "yet to come, and to continue a short space," was the government which succeeded the overthrow of the Emperors, and continued under various changes for about 300 years, till the days of Charlemagne; when a government was established which combined all the nations of Europe in support of the antichristian hierarchy. This short-lived intermediate power might on some accounts be considered as the "seventh" head of the beast, and as such be distinguished from its last head, which in this view would be the

"eighth:" but upon the whole, it was rather to be considered as belonging to that in which it terminated, and which in this view would be "of the seven."

The "ten horns" are the kingdoms of Europe, which till the Reformation all united with the empire in supporting the harlot; but which have already begun, and will go on to hate her, to eat her flesh, and to burn her with fire . . . . . Chap. xvii.

The second of these *Notes of Illustration* (contained in the 18th and the first eight verses of the 19th chapter) is a *sacred ode*, sent, as it were from heaven, to be sung at the overthrow of the antichristian church, in which are celebrated not only the "fall of Babylon," but "the marriage of the Lamb;" that is, not only the termination of the reign of the beast, but the introduction of the Millennial reign of Christ, which shall follow upon it . . . . . Chap. xviii. xix. 1—8.

The third and last of these *Notes* (which begins at the 9th verse of the 19th chapter) describes the *actual accomplishment* of the fall of Babylon, which the foregoing ode had anticipated. He whose name is the Word of God goes forth "riding upon a white horse," (the appropriate symbol for the success of the gospel,) joined by his faithful followers.—This provokes the adherents of the beast and of the false prophet, who, gathering together their forces to oppose them, perish in the attempt. Chap. xix. 9—21.

As the overthrow of the antichristian hierarchy was celebrated in the preceding ode, under the symbol of "the fall of Babylon," prior to its actual accomplishment; so was the Millennium under that of "the marriage-supper of the Lamb." This glorious period is now introduced as *actually taking place*. The "beast and the false prophet," or the secular and ecclesiastical powers being fallen, the Dragon himself is next seized and thrust into a state of confinement.—"Thrones" may denote stations of importance both in the world and in the church, which will now be filled by righteous men: thus "the kingdom is given to the people of the saints of the Most High;" and as the public mind will favour it, righteousness will every where prevail; corruptions, oppressions, wars, tumults, and rebellions, will cease from the earth, and all nations feel towards each other as children of the same family.—Now "judgment" is given to the martyrs, inasmuch as the cause for which they were slain is vindicated, and their memory honoured; while "the

rest," or the remnant of the antichristian party, who escaped from the battle in which their leaders were "taken," will be as dead men till the thousand years are ended. To them this glorious period will be a burial, but to the other a "resurrection."

After the Millennium, Satan is loosed for a little season, and makes one more desperate effort to corrupt the world, and to destroy the church. This brings on the general conflagration—the resurrection of the dead —and the last judgment . . . . . Chap. xx.

After this appear "the new heavens and the new earth" spoken of by Peter, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The world, purified from sin and its effects, becomes the everlasting abode of the righteous, who having been raised from the dead, are immortal.—The whole animate and inanimate creation, in so far as it has been "made subject to the vanity" of subserving the cause of evil, is emancipated, and possessed that for which it has "travailed in pain," from the fall of man until now.—No more shall the earth be polluted and desolated by a succession of *beasts;* but lo, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God.

Conclusion.—The present the period of the vials; or that space of time which begins with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and ends in the Millennium.—The termination of the 1260 years probably uncertain.—A time of persecution to be previously expected.—Great success will attend the preaching of the gospel before the Millennium.—Aspect of the present times.—The Millennial glory.—Concluding reflections on the recent changes in Europe.

EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES,

&c.

DISCOURSE I.

THE INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATORY VISION.

Chap. 1.

I HAVE lately expressed a wish to enter upon this difficult part of the Holy Scriptures: not because I conceive myself at present equal to the undertaking; but because I think I understand something of it, and hope by going through it in the way of exposition to understand more. I enter on it with fear: but as I shall not attempt to explain that which appears to me of doubtful import, I hope it may not be a presumptuous, but a profitable undertaking.*

1 *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:* 2 *Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.* 3 *Blessed is he that read-*

* These Discourses were delivered in the years 1809 and 1810, and drawn out in 1811.

eth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The book takes its title, it seems, from the first verse. All scripture is a revelation in some sense; but this is a disclosure of things to come.

Christ is the great prophet of the church. He it was, as we shall see, that was found worthy to open the sealed book. It is necessary to distinguish between the knowledge of Christ as a divine person, and that which he possesses as the prophet of his church. As divine, he knows all things; all things are naked to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do: but as a prophet he receives his messages from the Father, and makes them known to us. In this sense he knew not the day of judgment; that is, it was no part of the revelation which God gave to him to make known to men. As Christ in the character of a prophet has these things revealed to him, so in communicating them after his ascension he made use of an angel. It might have been too much for a mortal man to be admitted directly to converse with him in his glorified state.

The writer introduces himself to the churches in the character of a *witness*, declaring that the things which he was about to communicate were from above—they were "the word of God," and therefore might be depended upon; "the testimony of Jesus Christ," on the fulfilment of which he rested the truth of the gospel, and which he himself in vision plainly "saw."

To induce us to give the most serious attention to the subject, a blessing is pronounced on those who "read, and hear, and keep" the words of this prophecy, especially as the time of its fulfilment was at hand. I recollect no other part of scripture that is prefaced with such an inducement to read and understand and practically regard it. The prophecy must be of immediate concern to the church of Christ, and requires to be read and heard, not for the gratifying of curiosity, but for the obedience of faith. We must "keep" it, as one engaged in a voyage through dangerous seas keeps his chart, and consults it on all necessary occasions. It is that to the New Testament church which the

pillar of the cloud was to the church in the wilderness, guiding it through the labyrinths of antichristian errors and corruptions. It must not be neglected under a notion of its being hard to be understood. As well might the mariner amidst the rocks neglect his friendly chart, under an idea of its being difficult to understand and apply it.

It would seem too from this promise, that the successful study of the prophecy depends not merely on literary attainments, but on a practical regard to the things contained in it. Whatever advantages attach to the former, and these are many and great, they will not succeed nor obtain the blessing without the latter.

4 *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne:* 5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,* 6 *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* 7 *Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

The proconsular Asia had probably been the chief seat of the writer's labours since the death of the apostle Paul. To the churches in this province, therefore, he was directed to address the prophecy. The benediction is affectionate and appropriate. The periphrasis used of God the Father, "Who is, and who was, and who is to come," is singularly appropriate as an introduction to a prophecy concerning the mutability of creatures. The "seven spirits" are the abundant gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit in respect of his abundant gifts and graces. The number seven is not only a well-known symbol of perfection, but corresponds with the number of the churches; and as they represent the whole church, so these describe the Holy Spirit in his rich and abundant influences.

To the blessing from the Father and the Holy Spirit he adds, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." By the first of these appellations our Lord accredits the prophecy as being his testimony; and by the last two cheers his suffering followers, by reminding them of his having emerged from death and obtained a complete ascendency over all his and their enemies.

And now having mentioned the name of Jesus Christ he cannot leave it without adding a sweet doxology on his dying love, and its interesting effects—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Nor has he yet taken leave of this subject: Christ's suffering people must be directed to his second coming, when the persecuting Jews who pierced him in his person, and the persecuting Gentiles who were now piercing him in his members, will be called to account. To their just punishment, dreadful as it will be, the servants of God will add their "Amen."

8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

The apostle, after expatiating on the glory of Christ in his salutation, now introduces him as speaking himself. That these are his words, and not those of the Father, will appear from comparing them with Chap i. 1. and xxii. 6—16. It was Jesus Christ, and not the Father, who communicated, through the angel, with his servant John. The Father is sometimes referred to in the prophecy; but, if I mistake not, it is in the third person only: not as speaking, but as spoken of. Jesus Christ therefore is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty;" and consequently is able to preserve his church, and to execute the punishments denounced in this prophecy against her enemies.

9 *I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that*

is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,* 11 *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* 12 *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;* 13 *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.* 14 *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;* 15 *And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.* 16 *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.* 17 *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:* 18 *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* 19 *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,* 20. *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.*

It was usual for the most eminent prophets to be introduced to their work by an extraordinary vision. Such was the introduction of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, and of Ezekiel; * and such is that of John. Having been banished to the Isle of Patmos by Domitian, for preaching Christ, the spirit of prophecy came upon him on the Lord's day; when he heard from behind him a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,

* Isa. vi. Jer. i. Ezek. i.

and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. Turning to see from whence the voice proceeded, he saw "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like unto the Son of man." It was from him therefore that the great voice proceeded. In short, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ, who as to his human nature had lived and died on earth, but who as to his divine person was "the first and the last," standing as the great High Priest over the house of God, in the midst of his churches, clothed with ineffable glory.

The effect of such a vision was more than a frail mortal could sustain. He who when his Lord was upon earth leaned familiarly on his bosom, now "fell at his feet as dead." But, laying his right hand upon him, he said, "Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." This impressive vision would not only excite in his mind a deep interest in the kingdom of Christ, and so prepare him for what he was to see, and hear, and write; but must have tended greatly to relieve him from those anxieties for his brethren and companions in tribulation from whom he had been separated. All the apostles were dead: he only was left, and they had banished him. Hell and death threatened to swallow up the church. In this situation he is told not to fear, for that his Lord lived, and had the control of both the invisible and visible world.

Being commanded to write "the things which he *had seen*, the things that *were*, and the things that *should be hereafter*," we may conclude that what he wrote respected not only the future state of the church, from the time of the vision, but the whole gospel dispensation, from the ascension of Christ to the end of the world.

What is said of the "seven stars and seven golden candlesticks," would tend greatly to encourage both the ministers and the churches of Christ. There was a golden candlestick in the

tabernacle, and in the second temple,* That was but one candlestick, though it had seven branches; but these are seven candlesticks; agreeing with the different constitutions of the Old and New Testament church, the former being national, and the latter congregational.

* Exod. xxv. 31—40. Zech. iv. 2.

DISCOURSE II.

THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES.

Chap. ii. 1—17.

Before we enter on these Epistles distinctly, it is proper to make a few general remarks.

First, Some have considered these churches as *prophetically representing the different states of the church at large under the gospel dispensation.* There is no doubt but analogies may be found between them: but it appears to me that the hypothesis is unfounded. The church of Ephesus, if designed to represent the whole Christian church in the age of the apostles, might be expected to sustain as high a character at least as any that follow; whereas Smyrna in respect of its purity is manifestly superior to it. Every thing addressed to the latter is in its praise; which is not the case with the former. But surely it is not true that any age of the church since that of the apostles is to be compared with it, much less that it has excelled it in evangelical purity.

Others, doubting the justness of this hypothesis, have considered the Epistles to the churches as referring to *the then present state of the church*, and the sealed book to that which was *future*. And this they consider as agreeing with the division of the book into "things which the writer *had seen*, things which *were*, and things which *should be hereafter*."* This is Mr. Lowman's view of it. When I entered on these Discourses from the pulpit, I adopt-

* Chap. i. 19.

ed this opinion: but before I had proceeded far in the work, I was compelled to give it up, the reasons for which will appear when we enter on the opening of the seals, in Chap. vi. under the fifth general remark in Discourse VI.

Instead of considering the Epistles to the seven churches, either as prophetic, or as descriptive of the state of the *church at large as it then was*, I should rather consider them as descriptive of *the state of those seven churches as it then was*, and as designed to furnish encouragements, reproofs, warnings, and counsels, *to all other churches and Christians, in all future ages, as their cases are found to resemble theirs*. The application ought not to be confined to one age more than to another, nor even to collective bodies: every one in every age, that hath an ear to hear, is called to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

In applying them to ourselves, we should consider the Great Head of the Church as watching over us, and closely observing the state of our hearts towards him, with all our proceedings, whether good or evil; and inquire, what would be his address to us were he to commission an angel or an apostle to write to us.

Secondly, By the Epistles being addressed to the *angels*, we are not to understand them as concerning the pastors only, in distinction from the churches, but to consider them as their representatives. That which the Spirit saith in these Epistles is "to the churches."

Thirdly, In every address to the churches Christ assumes a distinct *character*, taken from some one part of the description given of him in the preceding vision; each of which, if we rightly understand it, will be found to be appropriate to the character or circumstances of the church addressed.

Fourthly, Every address begins with *commendation*, provided there be any thing to commend. This shows that Christ knows all, and notices that which is good amongst us as well as that which is evil; nay, that he takes more pleasure in noticing the good than in complaining of the evil—an example worthy of our imitation in dealing with one another. If we wish to reclaim our brethren who have fallen into sin, we must begin by appreciating the good in them, and in candidly commending it, before we re-

prove them for their faults. Such was the conduct of Paul to the Corinthians, when about to censure them for their abuse of the Lord's supper—"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you."

Fifthly, Most of the churches have somewhat on account of which they are *censured* and *admonished*. This is an humbling truth, even of the first and purest churches, how much more of those in our times! If the Son of God, whose eyes are as a flaming fire, were to pronounce our character, would there not be "somewhat against us?" We can see each other's errors and defects; but it were to much more advantage if we could detect our own.

Finally, Every epistle concludes with a *promise* to him that overcometh, and an *exhortation* to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Professing Christians in this world are soldiers enlisted under the banner of Christ. Some have proved deserters; many have been partially overcome; the Captain of the Lord's host here addresses them, holding forth the glory that awaits them who are finally victorious.

1 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;* 2 *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:* 3 *And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* 4 *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* 5 *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* 6 *But this thou hast, that thou hateth the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.* 7 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

Ephesus was the metropolis of the Proconsular Asia; and it is probable that all these churches were planted by the labours of the apostle Paul, during his two years' residence at Ephesus, when "all they who dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Acts xix. 10.

The Ephesians appear to have been in a good state when the apostle Paul took leave of their elders at Miletus; but he then gave them to expect a time of trial after his departure, and which by this time seems to have come upon them.

The *character* which our Lord here assumes is taken from Chap. i. 16, 20. and seems to contain both encouragement and warning; which fitly applies to *their* character, as partly commendable, and partly blameable. They had been distinguished by their exertions in promoting the cause of Christ, and their sufferings on account of it. They "worked," yea, they "laboured," for Christ, and when called to encounter persecution, bore it with "patience." They were zealous also in the exercise of a strict and holy discipline, not suffering evil characters and impostors to remain amongst them: and in this course of obedeince they had "not fainted." Altogether, this is a high character. Yet even here is something amiss: they had "left their first love." We see here, that the Lord looketh at the heart. We may retain our character and respectabilty among the churches, while yet, as to the state of our minds, Christ hath somewhat against us. To leave our first love is a very common case, so much so that some will give young Christians to expect it as a matter of course: but Christ treats it as a *sin*, and calls on the parties to "repent" of it, yea, and threatens to "remove their candlestick out of its place except they repented." To decline in our attachments to Christ, his gospel, his ordinances, his people, and his cause, is practically reproaching him: it is saying to those around us, that we have not found that in his religion which we once expected to find. *O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me!*

A declension in love is followed by a degeneracy in good works. If this had not been the case, they would not have been admonished to do their "first works." Either they were neglected, or

attended to in a half-hearted manner, different from what they were at the beginning.

The Lord, to show that he did not find fault with them with pleasure, again commends them as far as they were commendable: they hated the doctrine of the *Nicolaitanes*, which he also hated. Clemens of Alexandria, as quoted by Eusebius, speaks of these as a people who practised a community of wives, living in fornication and adultery. It is thought, and with some probability, that they were the people to whom Peter and Jude refer, the antinomians of the primitive church.

If we have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto this church, we shall learn from it, among other things, that works are the chief test of character; that in serving the Lord in this world there is great occasion for patience under sufferings, and discrimination of characters; and that while justly censuring others, we may decline in spirituality ourselves.

The promise to him that overcometh, is, that he shall "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." That which grew in the earthly paradise became inaccessible by sin; but no flaming sword nor cherubim prevent access to this.

8 *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last; which was dead, and is alive;* 9 *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.* 10 *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* 11 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

No mention is made of this church and several others, except in these epistles. Polycarp, the disciple of John, was pastor of it, and suffered martyrdom. Whether he was the angel here addressed is uncertain; but when he suffered, which was about the year 162, he speaks of himself as having served Christ 86 years, and Irenæus speaks of him as having been ordained Bishop of Smyrna

by the apostles. This church seems distinguished by its *persecutions;* all that is said has respect to them.

The character under which Chirst addresses them is taken from Chap. i. 11, 18. These things, saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive." The former is expressive of his Godhead, and suggests how vain it is for the enemies of the gospel to oppose him! In the latter he holds up himself as an example of persecution before them, and as an earnest of deliverance from it.

The commendaton of their "works" in the midst of tribulation and poverty, (poverty it is likely, arising from their persecutions,) is much to their honour. We see here of what little account worldly wealth is in the estimation of Christ. We hear much of *respectable* congregations, and churches, when little else is meant but that they are numerous or opulent: but the estimation of Christ goes on quite another principle. What a contrast there is between this church and that at Laodicea! They were rich in this world's goods, but poor towards God: these were poor in this world, but rich towards God.

It is intimated that they had not only to contend with Heathens, but *Jews*, who had a synagogue in this city: and it is remarkable that in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the Jews are spoken of as being very active in it, and as joining the Heathens in kindling the fire. We see here to what a state of mind that people were left after having rejected Christ: they had been the people of God, but were now no longer such, but blasphemers: their synagogues had been places where God had been worshipped: there our Lord himself attended, and to them the friends of God in Heathen countries had been used to resort; but from hence they became the synagogues of Satan!

They are given to expect more persecutions, but are encouraged to meet them with fortitude. The devil would stir up his agents to imprison some of them for a season, and some of them might expect to die for the name of Christ; but if faithful unto death, they are promised a crown of life.

It was about sixty-seven years after this that Polycarp and other members of this church, suffered martyrdom; the account of

which is given by Eusebius in a letter from the church of Smyrna. When Polycarp was apprehended by his persecutors, they set him on an ass, and brought him to the place of judgment. He was met by some of the magistrates, who took him into their carriage, and tried to persuade him to deny Christ and save his life, but which he resisted. On his approaching the place of execution the Proconsul, ashamed of putting so aged and venerable a man to death, urged him to blaspheme Christ. It was then that he answered, "Eighty-six years have I served him, during all which time he never did me injury; how then can I blaspheme my king and my Saviour?" When further urged, his answer was, "I am a Christian." When threatened with wild beasts, he said, "Bring them forth." When with fire, he reminded them of the eternal fire that awaited the ungodly. His last address to God had more of praise in it than of prayer.

It is a high honour to this persecuted people that nothing is said to them in a way of reproof. To be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in an evil generation," is great, even in respect of our fellow-creatures; but to be without rebuke from Christ himself is much greater.

To this suffering church Christ saith, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give the a crown of life. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Let every one that hath an ear hear this language, and be armed by it against the fear of man.

12 *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;* 13 *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among yon, where Satan dwelleth.* 14 *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* 15 *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.* 16 *Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with*

the sword of my mouth. 17 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

Pergamos was a city of Mysia, not far from Troas. We find the apostle Paul at this latter city more than once, and that "a door was here opened to him of the Lord, to preach Christ's gospel."* Here it was that he afterwards commemorated the Lord's death with the disciples; and as he had to wait seven days for their coming together, it would seem as if they had to come from some great distance. The church at Pergamos might therefore be planted about the same time.

The character under which our Lord addresses them is taken from Chap. i. 16. "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges;" and wears a terrible aspect towards a corrupt party amongst them, against whom he threatens to wage war.

Kind and encouraging things, however, are addressed to the body of them. Christ knew their "works," and their firm adherence to him under great trials and persecutions, in which one of their number in particular, and probably their pastor, had suffered martyrdom. Pergamos was a city said to be "sacred to the gods:" here therefore we might expect to find the head-quarters of idolatry and persecutions; and their standing firm in such a place, and at such times, was much to their honour.

But there were "a few things" amongst them which displeased Christ. Some of the members tampered with idolatry and its ordinary attendant, fornication; and the rest connived at it. This is called "the doctrine of Balaam," because it was in this way that the wicked prophet drew Israel into sin. They had also some of the "Nicolaitanes" amongst them, whose principles and practices the Lord abhorred.

They are called upon to repent, on pain of Christ's displeasure, who threatens, except they repent, to come unto them quickly,

* 2 Cor. ii. 12.

and to execute the judgments of his word against them, even against the transgressors themselves, and all who favoured them.

These warnings and threatenings require our attention, and that of all who are guilty in a greater or less degree of the same evils; nor do the encouragements to them that overcome require it less. The "hidden manna," the "white stone," and the "new name," being promised as the reward of them that overcome, seems to refer to the blessedness and honour of a future state, rather than of the present; though Christians doubtless have a foretaste of them even in this life. The "hidden manna" refers to those who should deny themselves of "eating things sacrificed to idols," and other carnal enjoyments, for Christ's sake; and denotes that there is a feast in reserve for them, which shall infinitely exceed the pleasures of flesh and sense. The Romans in judgment are said to have given their suffrage for condemnation by casting black stones into an urn, and for absolution white stones. White stones are also said to have been given by the Greeks to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won. The application of this is easy.

DISCOURSE III.

THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES, CONTINUED.

Chap. ii. 18—29. Chap. iii.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass ; 19 *I know thy works, and charity and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last to be more than the first.* 20 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* 21 *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication ; and she repented not.* 22 *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.* 23 *And I will kill her children with death ; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* 24 *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you none other burden.* 25 *But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.* 26 *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations :* 27 (*And he shall rule them with a rod of iron : as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers :*) *even as I received of my Father.* 28 *And I will give him the morning star.* 29 *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

The character under which our Lord addresses this church is taken from Chap. i. 13—15. with this variation: there he is described as "one like unto the Son of God;" as denoting his divine personality. With this agrees what is said of him, that "his eyes were like unto a flame of fire," discerning the secrets of the heart; "and his feet like fine brass" denoting the stability and glory of his proceedings. It is like saying, "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom you have to do. Seeing then that ye have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, hold fast your profession!"

It is a high commendation that is given of this church, for its "works, and charity, and service, and patience, and works." Nor is this last word repeated without cause; it denotes their *persevering* and even *abounding* in good works; "the last were more than the first." There are few churches, I fear, of which this can be said. Christ may know our works—and our works: but in most cases the first are more than the last!

Yet with all this excellence, Christ has a few things against them. With all this positive good, there was a mixture of relative evil. "The woman Jezebel," seems to relate to a corrupt part of the church, who though united to God's people, as Jezebel was by marrying an Israelitish prince, yet were in heart attached to idolatry, and laboured to seduce others into it. As a corrupt part of the Christian church is described as a harlot, so a corrupt part of a particular church, may be thus designated; and as Jezebel pretended to divine authority, and had her prophets to draw the servants of God into literal and spiritual fornication, so these had a kind of religion which would comport with eating and drinking at idolatrous temples, and so with occasional conformity to idolatry. They had had space to repent; the Lord had long borne with them: but his forbearance operated, as it often does, to harden them in their sin. This forbearance, however, will not continue always: Jezebel, with her adulterous paramours, will, except they repent, be cast together into a bed of devouring fire; and this for a warning to the churches.

It seems that, like some among the Corinthians, they boasted of their *knowledge*, as being able to distinguish between eating at an

idol's temple and worshipping it (1 Cor. viii. 1.); they spake of their *depths* in knowledge; but Christ calls them "the depths of Satan," and virtually disowns their abettors, distinguishing the faithful from them—"Unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have hold fast till I come."

The promise to them that overcome the temptations of the present life is a final triumph. They shall judge the world of the ungodly: and those who have persecuted them, and set themselves against them, and then fall before them. As a potter's vessel is broken to shivers, so shall they be destroyed; and all this according to the commission which Christ received of his Father.

Nor is this all: Christ will give unto them that overcome "the morning star." As this is one of the names assumed by himself, (Chap. xxii. 16.) it may denote that he himself will be their portion.

The exhortation "He that hath an ear, let him hear," &c. may in this case direct our attention to the following important particulars—That we may be members of a true church, and yet not true members of the church; that the mixture of evil characters and evil things which at present are found in Christ's visible kingdom greatly tarnishes its glory, but in the end he will gather them out, and then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; that we may have space given us for repentance, and yet never repent, which will greatly aggravate our doom; that there is a species of knowledge with which it is our honour and happiness to be unacquainted; finally, that the hope of victory is sufficient to stimulate us under all our conflicts.

1 *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* 2 *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.* 3 *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I*

will come upon thee. 4 *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.* 5 *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiments; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.* 6 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

This church lies under the heavy charge of having "a name to live while it was dead." The address to it is taken from Chap. i. 4. 20. and may be designed to direct them and their pastor where to look for reviving grace. Nothing is said in a way of commendation, except to individuals amongst them. This indicates a bad state indeed. There are not many churches but individuals might be found in them who love the Lord. The "works" which Christ knew appear to be the same as those which he had "not found perfect before God." Though therefore he knew them, he did not approve of them. It is bad for the world to be dead; but for a church to be so is worse: this is salt without savour; which is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. It is bad for individuals to be dead; but for the body of a church to be so is deplorable. It is implied, that they were not only destitute of spirituality, but had defiled their garments by worldly conformity.

There had been some good amongst them, or they would not have been called to "remember how they had received and heard;" and some remains of it might continue. As no complaint is made of false doctrine, it is likely they continued orthodox, and kept up the forms of godliness. There seem to have been something of truth, love, and zeal; but they were like dying embers, ready to expire.

Christ admonishes them to awake from their stupidness, to take the alarm, and to strengthen the things which remained that were ready to die. This is done by each one beginning with himself, and ending with one another.

The means of recovery from such a state are, "Remembering how we received and heard" the gospel at first. Call to remembrance the former days, not to get comfort under our declensions, but to recover those views and sensations which we had at the

beginning of our Christian course. There were many also, who at first had received the gospel with much heart, and had heard it with delight, but who in the course of forty years would be removed by death. Let them call to remembrance the love and zeal of their fathers, and be ashamed of their own declensions. If these admonitions did not awaken them, they are given to understand that Christ will come upon them in an unexpected hour, even as a thief cometh in the night.

The "few names which had not defiled their garments" are highly commended. To walk with God at any time is acceptable to him; and to do this while others around us are corrupt, is more so. This is being faithful among the faithless. They shall walk with Christ in glory, honour, and purity. With this agrees the promise to them that overcome: "They shall be clothed in white raiment; and Christ will not blot out their names from the book of life." The blessed God is represented as keeping a register of his servants, not as elect, or as redeemed, or as called, but as his *professed followers*. When any turn back, their names are blotted out. Hence at the last judgment it is made the rule of condemnation. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Chap. xx. 15. Some were never there, having never professed to be the followers of Jesus, while others who had been there were blotted out: in either case their names would not be found there. Hence also it is the rule of admission into the New Jerusalem. Chap. xxi. 27.

"He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." Let us be aware of judging ourselves by what others think of us. We may have a name to live amongst our brethren, and yet be dead. Our names may be written among the professed followers of Christ, and yet be blotted out when he comes to judgment. But let faithful individuals know, that whatever may be the end of others, Jesus will confess them before his Father, and before his angels.

7 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy: he that is true; he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth:* 8 *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little*

strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.* 10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* 11 *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* 12 *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.* 13 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

There is a great difference between this church and the last: there was there nothing to commend; here nothing is censured. The character under which they are addressed is taken from Chap. i. 13. and accords with the address itself. "He that was holy, and true" approved of them; and he that had the keys of David, who opened and no man shut, had "set an open door before them."

The Lord knew and approved of their works, and would make hem more and more successful. They were not distinguished opulence; nor perhaps by any of those things that render a people respectable in the eyes of the world; but of their "little strength," they had made good use; had held fast the truth, and stood firm under persecution, which is of more account in the esteem of Christ than all other things.

This, and most of the primitive churches met with great opposition from the Jewish synagogue, which is here again called "the synagogue of Satan;" whose members having rejected the Messiah, were no longer worthy of the name of Jews. They that say they are what they are not, whether it be Jews or Christians, are commonly the bitterest of persecutors. Their "coming" to them in a way of cringing submission, may refer to a state of things in which, a door being opened in a way of success, the Christians should be increased in number and in power; while the Jews,

owing to their wars with the Romans, would be glad of their friendship.

The gospel is called "the word of Christ's patience," in respect of what it was to them. The retention of it under a succession of cruel persecutions required great patience; yet they had kept it, and the Lord promised in return to keep them in a particular time of trial that was coming upon the world. It might be by a renewal of persecution in the empire, or by the prevailing of corruptions in the church. As the Lord punishes sin by giving men up to sin, so he rewards righteousness by preserving them in the paths of it. We have had many of these hours of temptation, and may have many more: blessed are they that are preserved through them!

They are directed to look for the coming of their Lord, and to hold fast truth and true religion, lest their adversaries should wrest it out of their hands, and so deprive them of their reward.

The promise to them that overcome is, that they shall be "pillars in the celestial temple; and unlike those of the Jewish temple, which were removed by the Chaldeans and by the Romans, shall "go no more out." We are not to reckon the future greatness of men according to their talents in this life, but according to the use made of them. Those who have here had but "a little strength," may there become pillars in the temple. The pillars of the church on earth go out and leave it by death; but those of the church above will abide for ever.

The writing upon them of the name of God, and the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, and of his own new name, doubtless means as much as this—that they should be treated as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, as citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and as those who are redeemed from among men.

It is for us, both as individuals and as churches, to take encouragement from this address to hold that fast which we have, that no man take our crown.

14 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;* 15 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.* 16 *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will*

spue thee out of my mouth. 17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* 18 *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* 19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.* 20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me.* 21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* 22 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

This church appears to have been in the worst state of any of the seven. Sardis, though it had nothing to commend, had a few excellent names; but Laodicea is censured without distinction. Yet even this church is not given up, but *rebuked in love.*

The character under which the Laodiceans are addressed is that of "the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Being lifted up with their riches, they might be tempted to refuse this faithful witness that was borne against them: but however disagreeable, it was "true." Christ is here called, "The beginning of the creation of God." It is true that as to his human nature he was himself created: the name here assumed, however, does not refer to this; but to his being the head (αρχη) and first cause of creation. Thus in Col. i. 15. he is called "the first-born of every creature;" not as being himself a creature, but the first cause of creation: "For (it is added,) by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."* A message from such a character deserved their serious attention.

* Col. i. 15—17.

Christ knew their works, but could not approve of them: for they were "neither cold nor hot." They may be said to be cold who have no religion, and pretend to none; and they to be hot, who are zealously engaged in Christ's work: but this people were neither this nor that. They were not decidedly religious, and yet would not let religion alone.

This state of mind is represented as being peculiarly offensive to Christ. To halt between truth and error, God and the world, is worse in many respects than to be openly irreligious. Corrupt Christianity is more offensive to God than open infidelity. No man thinks the worse of religion for what he sees in the openly profane; but it is otherwise in respect of religious professors. If he that nameth the name of Christ depart not from iniquity, the honour of Christ is affected by his misconduct.

These people appear to have been very proud, and withal very ignorant of themselves. Their opulence seems to have lifted them up. Religion seldom thrives with much worldly prosperity. Men covet such things, and value themselves upon them; but they are commonly snares to their souls. It is a hard thing for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. If these were the "riches" of which they boasted, it shows that the estimate of worldly greatness formed by the faithful and true witness, is very different from that of the generality of men. Of what account is it in his sight to be rich and increased in goods, while as to our spiritual concerns we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?

Being charged with *blindness*, and counselled to use means to remove it, it would seem however that the riches of which they boasted included those of the mind: and that they were proud of their *knowledge* and *gifts*, as well as of their wealth. Like the Corinthians, "they were full, they were rich, they reigned as kings without the apostles." There is much of this still among professing Christians. One party looks down upon another, and values itself for its superior light; one declaims against pharisaism in the true spirit of a pharisee; another is busy about the mote in his brother's eye, regardless of the beam in his own. The sentence of the faithful and true witness concerning all that are wise

and righteous in their own eyes is, Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and knowest it not!

In respect of the *counsel* offered them, they are addressed like sinners in common, who knew not the Saviour. This was probably the case with many of them; and if some had known him, yet being in a backsliding state, the best counsel that could be given them was, that they should come as sinners *immediately* to the Saviour. They are directed to seek the true *riches*, the true *righteousness* and the true *wisdom*, and to deal with Christ for them; not as giving him any valuable consideration for them, (for this as being *poor* they could not,) but as parting with all for them. This is "buying without money and without price." This is the way in which sinners come to Christ at first, and this is the way for backsliders to be restored. The child that has been ill taught must begin anew and go over every rule again.

To reconcile them to this sharp and humbling reproof they are assured that these were not the words of an enemy, but of one that bare them good will. It shows the great forbearance and long-suffering goodness of our Lord, even towards them that have greatly dishonoured him. It also teaches us to put a right construction on divine rebukes, receiving them as the rod of correction to bring us to repentance.

To counsel is added a word of encouragement and of warning.—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Here again they seem to be treated rather as sinners, than as Christians. If the common invitations of the gospel be acceptable, they are welcome to them. Jesus stands at their door, and knocks for admission. Do they hear him? and will they open the door and welcome him? If so, he will come in, and be their guest. But if they are so taken up with their present company as not to hear him, or at least not to open to him, he will go away, as he did from the Jewish temple—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

If this serious and tender address did not reclaim them as a body, yet the promise to them that should overcome, that they

should "sit down with him in his throne, as he also had overcome, and was set down with his Father in his throne," might encourage individuals to return and hold out to the end.

Let these censures, warnings, and encouragements, addressed to the seven churches in Asia, as a specimen of the whole, be heard and regarded by the churches of Christ, and by every individual member of them, to the end of time.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE VISION PRECEDING THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

Chap. iv.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. 2 *And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.* 3 *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.* 4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.* 5 *And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices: And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.* 6 *And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.* 7 *And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.* 8 *And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty,*

which was, and is, and is to come. 9 *And when those living creatures give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,* 10 *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,* 11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

The whole of this chapter is introductory to what follows. The scene of the vision is the heavenly world. Nowhere else could it have been with equal propriety. Where, but at the fountain of intelligence and influence, should a creature learn the secrets of futurity? When Ahab's destiny was revealed to Micaiah, the scene of the vision was laid in heaven.*

A door being opened, the apostle is invited to enter in. Having entered, he immediately finds himself under prophetic inspiration. He was not removed from earth as to his body: but, as Ezekiel was carried by the Spirit to Jerusalem, and saw what was transacting there, while his body was still in Chaldea, so it was with him; he was still in the Isle of Patmos, while wrapt up by divine inspiration, and introduced into the immediate presence of God.

In this supernatural state of mind he beheld a "throne," and one "sitting upon it," who was the Supreme Disposer of all the concerns of creatures. Such a sight would impress him with the conviction that whatever should befall the church, or the world, it was all according to his will who ruled in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Ver. 1, 2.

No description is given of the ever blessed God, only that his glory seemed to resemble the lustre of certain precious stones; and this may allude to the visible glory of the God of Israel as displayed in the temple. A rainbow was also round about the throne, in appearance like an emerald. We know that this from of old was a sign of peace and good will to men. It may here denote that the glorious majesty of God, which in itself were too

* 1 Kings xxii. 19—22.

much to be endured, would be displayed towards his church in connexion with covenant mercy. Ver. 3.

Having spoken of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, sitting on his throne, he next describes his retinue. Here are twenty-four seats, or subordinate thrones, on which sat twenty-four elders, clothed in white, and with crowns of gold upon their heads. The "lightnings, and thunderings, and voices," may denote not only the awful majesty of God, as when he appeared at Sinai, but that from him proceeded all the terrible judgments which would shortly afflict the earth. Besides these there were "seven lamps of fire before the throne," which are said to be "the seven spirits of God;" answering, it may be, to the seven candlesticks, and being as it were a lamp to each candlestick. The light imparted by the churches is all derived from the Holy Spirit. These seven lamps enlighten the world. Ver. 4, 5.

"Before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal." This crystal sea, as it was in appearance, but which was so solid that the harpers are afterwards described as standing upon it, may be opposed to the troubled tumultuous sea out of which the beast would rise, and may denote the grandeur and immutability of the divine throne as opposed to the turbulence and uncertainty of earthly thrones. The four living creatures seem to be the same as those described by Ezekiel, and to allude, as they did, to the cherubim in the holy of holies. That which the wheels were to the one, the elders are to the other; connected with them like horses in a chariot, in all their movements. Of the former it is said, "When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, these were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."* Of the latter it is said, "When those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to

* Ezek. i. 21.

receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

The living creatures cannot be angels, for both they and the elders are distinguished from them in Chap. vii. 11., where all the angels are said to "stand round about the throne, *and* about the elders and the four living creatures." Besides this, the living creatures and the elders speak of themselves as "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Chap. v. 9. Those who led the worship under the Old Testament might be meant by the living creatures of Ezekiel; and those who lead the worship under the New Testament may be signified by those of John. They and the elders, like the stars and the candlesticks, appear to be the representatives of Christ's ministers and churches in the heavenly assembly. They are not described as being themselves on earth, or in a state of affliction, but as before the throne of God: as though a number of the spirits of just men made perfect had been chosen of God, to represent in his immediate presence their brethren upon earth, and who, as things should be described which concerned the church, would express the interest they felt in them.

The description of the living creatures as bearing a resemblance to certain animals, and as having each six wings, which wings were "full of eyes within," would naturally express their useful properties, particularly the union of zeal and knowledge; and their unceasing ascriptions of glory to God may denote the tendency of their ministerial labours. The elders were crowned, but they cast their crowns before the throne. Such appear to be the scene and the scenery of this preparatory vision. Ver. 6—11.

DISCOURSE V.

THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

Chap. v.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* 3 *And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.* 4 *And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon.* 5 *And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* 6 *And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.* 7 *And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.* 8 *And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.* 9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:* 10 *And hast made us*

unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;* 12 *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* 13 *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* 14 *And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.*

That which is here called "a book," must not be supposed to resemble our books, which since the invention of printing have been very different from those of the ancients. Conceive of seven skins of parchment, written upon one on side,* and rolled up, suppose on wood. At the end of every skin a seal is affixed on the backside, so that the contents of it cannot be read till the seal is opened. This book, or roll, or volume, being "in the right hand of him that sat on the throne," denotes that futurity is known only to God. The proclamation made for one that should be worthy to open the book, shows how desirable it was that the mind of God in regard of futurity, should be revealed, for strengthening the faith and supporting the hope of his church upon earth; and as John had been invited for the very purpose of learning "the things that should be hereafter," things which related to the church of Christ which he had been employed in raising, it must be peculiarly interesting to him. He must needs be anxious to know the things that should befall these his people in the latter days. To see a book therefore which contained them, and yet

* By the punctuation in our translation, it would seem as if they were written upon on both sides; but this would not comport with the contents being secret, which they were till the seals were unloosed. It seems, therefore, that a comma is necessary after the word "within," in verse 1. Several other versions, and some editions of our own, read it, *A book written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals.*

none in heaven or earth is found worthy to open it, might well make him weep. Ver. 1—4.

This want of a suitable person to open the book is introduced for the purpose of *doing honour to the Lamb*, whose success gives universal joy and satisfaction. The work of making known the mind of God was an honour too high for any mere creature in heaven or on earth: it was given to Christ as the reward of his obedience unto death. Ver. 9. The honour of preaching the gospel is represented as being of *grace:* "Unto me, (said Paul,) who am less than the least of all saints is this *grace* given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." That which Christ received as the reward of his death, we receive in our measure, of grace, and for his sake; and a great favour it is to be bearers of such good tidings.

One of the elders perceiving the apostle to weep under an apprehension that all must remain unknown, saith unto him, "Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." John was not so unacquainted with the scriptures as to be at any loss who this could mean. Probably however he expected to behold his Lord in some majestic form corresponding to the imagery: but lo, instead of a Lion, he saw a Lamb, a Lamb as it had been slain! yet invested with perfect authority, and possessing perfect knowledge, so as to qualify him for the work: for he had "seven horns, and seven eyes." Ver. 5, 6.

This glorious personage, in whom are united the majesty of the Lion and the gentleness of the Lamb, approaches him that sat upon the throne, and takes the book out of his right hand; denoting on his own part the undertaking of the work, and on that of God his perfect approbation. Ver. 7.

And now the whole church of God by their representatives are described as falling down before the Lamb, and joining in a chorus of praise. The "golden vials full of odours," doubtless allude to those of the priests who offered incense, and denote that the church on earth is ever employed in presenting its petitions before the throne. They had also "harps" as well as vials, and "sung a new song," denoting the great occasion there now was for joy and

praise. A new song is suited to a new manifestation of mercy. The Lamb is found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals; and they perceive the ground of it to lie in his having redeemed them at the expense of his blood. For this they bless his name, as also for his having made them kings and priests unto God, and given them to expect that however they were at present oppressed on earth, they should even there be finally victorious. Ver. 8—10.

Nor could the angels on such an occasion be silent, but must join in the choir. Myriads of myriads, a number that no man could number, unite in ascribing worthiness to the Lamb, and that on the same ground as redeemed men had done, namely, his having been "slain:" a proof this of disinterested affection, both to the Redeemer and the redeemed. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham: yet angels unite in praising him for his love to men.

In enumerating the things which he was worthy to receive, it is remarkable how they keep their eye on those perfections of which he had *emptied* himself in his humiliation. He did not lay aside any thing pertaining to his *goodness*, but merely what belonged to his greatness. He was no less holy, just, faithful, and merciful when on earth, than he is now in heaven: but he emptied himself of "power," as laying aside his authority, and taking upon him the form of a servant; of "riches," as becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich: of "wisdom," as making himself of no reputation; of "strength," as becoming weak and subject to death like other men; of "honour," as not appearing in his native divinity, but as a man, and a man of obscure birth, despised of the people; of "glory" as subjecting himself to shame and disgrace; and of "blessing," as receiving not the benedictions so much as the execrations of those among whom he sojourned. The purport of the song is, By how much he hath emptied himself on earth, by so much let him be magnified and exalted in heaven! Ver. 11, 12.

Nor is the song confined to angels; the whole creation joins in praising him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever; while at every pause the representatives of the redeemed add

their emphatic " Amen," adoring in humble prostration him that liveth for ever and ever. Ver. 13.

Such an august and affecting representation expresses the sentiments which become the friends of Christ while contemplating that great cause which is carrying on in the world, and which the world in a manner overlooks. To this may be added, If such be the glory ascribed to the Saviour whilst events are merely foretold, what will it be when they are actually accomplished, and when they shall be reviewed in the heaven of heavens to all eternity!

DISCOURSE VI.

THE SEALS OPENED.

Chap. vi.

Before we enter on the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, or the pouring out of the vials, it will be proper to make a few general remarks.

First, The whole series of events here revealed is included in the sealed book. We are not to conceive of the seals as containing one series of events, the trumpets another, and the vials another; but as all being included in the seals: for the seven trumpets are only subdivisions of the seventh seal, and the seven vials of the seventh trumpet.

Secondly, This division into seals, and subdivision into trumpets and vials, appears to be the *only one* which the prophecy requires, or even admits. Not to mention its division into *chapters*, which are sometimes made in the midst of a subject, the scheme of dividing it into *periods*, which Mr. Lowman and many others have favoured, seems to be merely a work of the imagination. There are doubtless some remarkable periods in the prophecy, such as that of the 1260 years, &c.; but to make them *seven* in number, and for this purpose to reckon the day of judgment, and the heavenly state, as periods, is fanciful. It is by the division of the prophecy itself into seals, and the subdivision of the seventh seal into trumpets, and of the seventh trumpet into vials, that we must steer our course.

Thirdly, In tracing the events symbolized by the seals, trumpets, and vials, there is no necessity for supposing that every preceding

one must be finished before that which follows it can have begun, It is enough if they succeed each other in the manner of the four monarchies predicted in the seventh chapter of Daniel. The Babylonish empire was not extinct before that of Persia began; nor that of Persia before that of Macedonia began; nor that of Macedonia before that of Rome began. The latter end of each would be cotemporary with the beginning of that which followed: yet upon the whole they succeeded each other *in the empire of the world*: and this was sufficient to justify their being represented in succession. Thus the wars of the *red* horse in this chapter might commence before the conquests of the *white* horse were ended, and continue in part while the events signified by the *black* horse occurred. The beginnings and endings of each might run into the other, while yet upon the whole they were successive. It is on this account that I am not solicitous to determine the year when each begins or ends.

Fourthly, So far as the seals, trumpets, or vials respect the world, it is *as connected with the church*. The plan of this prophecy is much the same as that of the Old Testament: it follows religion, and what concerns religion only. Why is there so much said in the scriptures of *Nineveh* and *Babylon*, rather than of other heathen cities in those times, but because these powers had to do with the people of God? Why are the ravages of the four beasts predicted by Daniel, but for the same reason? Had it not been for this, they might have risen and fallen unnoticed by the scriptures, as much as *Carthage*, *Palmyra*, or *Pekin*. It is this that accounts for so much being said by Daniel of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is this that accounts for so much being said by John of the Roman empire, rather than of the other great empires of the earth; for it was here that Christianity would be principally embraced. And as the Roman empire and the profession of Christianity would in the latter ages be in a manner confined to Europe, so the greater part of what respects the world in the latter part of these prophecies is in a manner confined to that quarter of the earth. The scriptures, foreseeing that Europe would be the seat of both the Christian church, and the antichristian beast and

harlot, predicts events concerning this part of the world, while they overlook the other parts.

Nor must we expect to find *all* the great events even of those parts of the world which are connected with the church. As the Old Testament history in respect of the nations connected with Israel, is *select*, so we may expect to find the New Testament prophecy. If some of the mightiest changes in Europe have no place in this prophecy, we are not to consider the omission of them as a defect, but rather take it for granted that God did not judge the introduction of them necessary for his purpose.

Fifthly, The commencement of the prophecy is, I apprehend, to be reckoned from the ascension of Christ. It has been common, I am aware, to reckon it from the time of the vision, which is supposed to have been under the reign of Domitian, about the year 95. On this principle Mr. LOWMAN proceeds. Hence he confines the opening of the first seal, on which it is said "there appeared a *white* horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown, and went forth conquering and to conquer," to the success of the gospel *after the year* 95, *leaving out the whole of that which accompanied the labours of the apostles.* In like manner the opening of the second seal, on which there went forth "a *red* horse, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another," is confined to those wars between the Jews and Romans which occurred between the years 100 and 138, *leaving out the whole of those which issued in the destruction of Jerusalem.** But surely it must appear singular that in a prophetic description of the success of the gospel in the early ages the most glorious part of it should be left out; and that in a like description of the wars between the Jews and Romans the most terrible part should be omitted. The reason given by Mr. LOWMAN for its being so, is, "The destruction of Jerusalem *being past*, can hardly be supposed to be denoted by a prediction of a judgment to come." Doubtless it is in general true that prophecies are predictions of things to come: in some instances, however, they may refer to events, *the beginnings of which* are already accomplished.

* See Lowman's History of the First and Second Seals, pp. 40—42.

There is a remarkable instance of this in the prophecies of Daniel concerning the four monarchies. He speaks of his seeing them all *rise up out of the sea;* * yet at the time of the vision the first of them, namely Babylon, had risen, and reigned, and was near its end; for it was in the first year of Belshazzar, who was its last king. And why should not the apostle in like manner commence the prophecy with the commencement of the Christian dispensation, though he wrote above sixty years after it? This makes the sealed book to contain a perfect system of New Testament prophecy, from the ascension of Christ to the end of all things. By this we include the success of the apostles in the conquests of the man on the white horse under the first seal, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in those of the red horse under the second seal. By this too we are furnished with an easy interpretation of the division of the book into "things which the writer *had seen*, things which *were*, and things which should be *hereafter*." He had actually seen the great progress of the gospel from the time of Christ's ascension, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; he then saw the church struggling under a cruel persecution; and that which should be revealed to him would carry on those struggles till she should rise triumphant over all opposition in her New Jerusalem glory.

1 *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures, saying, Come, and see.* 2 *And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.*

There is no doubt of this being meant of the glorious success of the gospel in the early ages of the church, even when it had to encounter the most bloody persecutions. Of this the *white horse* is the appropriate symbol.† "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty: with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things."‡ I

* Chap. vii. 1—3. † Chap. xix. 11. 12.
‡ Psa. xlv. 3. 4.

need not show how truly this accords with historic fact. Suffice it to say, that from the beginning, as the Jews alleged against the apostles, "Jerusalem was *filled* with their doctrine." It was foretold that before the destruction of that city, the gospel should be preached in all the world.* Paul himself preached it, and that fully, "from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum:" and, as he says in behalf of himself and his fellow-labourers, "God always caused them to triumph in every place." The Cæsars set themselves against it; yet in spite of all their efforts, there were, even in Paul's time, saints in Cæsar's household.

The epistles of Pliny and Tiberianus, Governors of Asia Minor and Syria, to Trajan the Emperor, within ten or twelve years after the banishment of John to the Isle of Patmos, furnish a striking and unexceptionable proof of the progress of the gospel in those times. By the amazing number of persons who avowed themselves Christians, and so exposed themselves to death, they were moved with compassion and wrote to know what they were to do with them. "The number is so great, (says Pliny,) as to call for the most serious deliberation. Informations are pouring in against multitudes, of every age, of all orders, and of both sexes: and more will be impeached; for the contagion of this superstition hath spread, not only through cities, but villages, and hath even reached the farm-houses." He also speaks of the temples as having been almost desolate, the sacred solemnities [of idolatry] as having been intermitted, and the sacrificial victims as finding but few purchasers. "I am quite wearied, (says Tiberianus,) with punishing and destroying the Galileans."

3 *And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see.* 4 *And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*

This and the two following seals relate to the judgments of God upon the churches' enemies. Great and terrible wars are as naturally suggested by the symbol of a *red* horse, as a success of

* Matt. xxiv. 14.

the gospel was by a white one. The wars particularly alluded to, appear to be those between the Jews and Romans, who having united in persecuting the church, as well as in crucifying its head, were now permitted to "kill one another." It is well known that in the reign of *Vespasian*, the Jews having rebelled against the Romans, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed, the temple reduced to ashes, and an immense number slain.* Forty or fifty years after this, in the reign of *Trajan*, the Jews in Egypt and in Cyprus rebelled, and are said to have slain with great marks of cruelty, *four hundred and sixty thousand men;* yet the Jews were every where subdued: a far greater number, therefore, must have been slain amongst themselves. Soon after this, in the reign of *Hadrian*, the Jews who were left in Palestine after the destruction of their metropolis, were drawn into a new rebellion, by adhering to a pretended Messiah, whose name was *Barchocab*. In these wars, besides what were lost on the side of the Romans, the Jews are said to have had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, with the slaughter of above *five hundred and eighty thousand men*. The Jews having employed the Roman power to crucify the Lord of Glory, God employed it to destroy them and their city. Their carnal policy told them that if they let him alone, all men would believe on him, and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. Whether guilty or not guilty, it was judged expedient that he should die, and that the whole nation should not perish. The whole nation however *did* perish, and that by means of the Romans. Such was the result of that policy which was employed against the Lord, and against his Christ: and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel,—"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Chap. ix. 26.

* Mr. LOWMAN, from *Usher's Annals*, says, "A million and a half according to some, according to others two millions, besides what were slain on the side of the Romans."

DISCOURSE VII.

THE OPENING OF THE SEALS, CONTINUED.

Chap. vi.

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse ; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 *And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny ; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*

A *black* horse is the symbol for famine, or of a scarcity approaching to famine, by which the necessaries of life required to be dealt out by weight and measure, and special orders to be given that nothing should be wasted.* Such appears to have been the state of things in the Roman empire for a long time, during the reigns of the *Antonines*. It was in reference to these, among other calamities, that *Turtullian* speaks, representing the Heathens as ascribing them to the Christians, because they taught men to despise the gods.†

The " measure" here referred to is the chœnix, which contained the ordinary allowance of corn to a man for a day ; and as the price of a measure of wheat in those times was a Roman " penny," which was the amount of a day's wages, it follows that

† Apology, Chap. XL. Lowman's History of the Third Seal. p. 46.
* See Lam. v. 10. Lev. xxvi. 26.

for a poor man to have lived on wheaten bread would have required all his labour, without any thing for other necessaries, or even bread for his family!

7 *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come and see.* 8 *And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

The *pale* horse was the symbol of great *mortality*, by various means: particularly by the sword, by hunger, by pestilence, and by the beasts of the earth. The facts were, that between the years 193 and 270, that is, in less than eighty years, there were more than twenty emperors, and at one time thirty pretenders to the throne. It is said also there were thirty usurpers, who raised wars for themselves in different parts of the empire. Such a state of things is sufficient to account for all that is here predicted: for intestine wars must needs produce famine and pestilence, and by destroying men, give an ascendency to the beasts of prey. In this manner the enemies of the gospel were visited, who continued, with but little intermission, to persecute the church of God.

In understanding the symbols of the *white*, the *red*, the *black*, and the *pale* horses, of the success of the gospel, and the judgments of God on its enemies, there is sufficient unity of design. They all bear a relation to the church, and to the Jews and Romans only as persecuting it.

9 *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:* 10 *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* 11 *And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

A view of an *altar*, and the *sacrifices* that had been made upon it, fitly represents the numerous martyrdoms which had been

made at the time under the Heathen emperors. The "souls under the altar," are the departed spirits of those Christians who had fallen in the arduous contest, which are supposed to cry aloud for retribution. The "white robes" denote the heavenly honours conferred upon them. The answer to their appeal, in which they are encouraged to expect a retribution "after a little season and when the number of their fellow-servants and brethren, who should be killed as they were, [by the hand of Paganism,] should be fulfilled," determines the period to which the vision refers. It is supposed that they had suffered under *nine* of the ten persecutions, and had only to wait for the completion of their number under the *tenth*, which being accomplished, God would take vengeance on their persecutors. The opening of this seal therefore would refer to about the year 270, when the ninth persecution was past, and the tenth under *Dioclesian* and *Maximian* was approaching; and which is said to have been more extensive and bloody than any which had gone before it. Its professed object was nothing less than the utter extirpation of Christianity. The places for Christian worship were everywhere demolished, Bibles destroyed, and an immense number of Christians put to death. "It were endless and almost incredible, (says *Echard*,) to enumerate the variety of sufferers and torments they were scourged to death, had their flesh torn off with pincers, and mangled with broken pots; were cast to lions, tigers, and other wild beasts; were burnt, beheaded, crucified, thrown into the sea, torn in pieces by the distorted boughs of trees, roasted by gentle fires, and holes made in their bodies for melted lead to be poured into their bowels. This persecution lasted ten years under *Dioclesian* and some of his successors; and the number of Christians who suffered death and punishment made them conclude that they had completed their work: and in an ancient inscription they tell the world *that they have effaced the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored and propagated the worship of the gods.* But they were so much deceived, that this hastened the destruction of Paganism.*

* Roman History, Vol. II. p. 550. Eusebius, in the VIIIth book of his Ecclesiastical History, gives a particular account of this persecution, of which he was an eye-witness.

This was the first persecution that reached Britain, then a Roman colony, in which *Alban* suffered, and great numbers after him. "Our stories record, (says Fox the martyrologist,) that all Christianity almost in the whole Island was destroyed, the churches subverted, all books of scripture burned, and many of the faithful, both men and women, slain."

12 *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;* 13 *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.* 14 *And the heavens departed a a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.* 15 *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;* 16 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:* 17 *For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

An "earthquake" is the appropriate symbol of a revolution; and an earthquake accompanied with an eclipse of the sun and moon, and what was more than an eclipse the "falling of the stars to the earth," as though nature herself were dissolved, denotes, I conceive, the overthrow of the *Pagan* empire by the arms of Constantine. The ruling powers of the world are that to the common people which the sun and moon and stars are to the earth: hence great changes in nations are expressed by God's "shaking the heavens and the earth;" and sometimes by the very imagery here used. "All the host of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as the falling fig from the fig-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment." Isa. xxxiv. 4, 5. The revolution that took place in the time of Constantine was not of a civil, so much as of a religious character. The government was still imperial, and the difference between one emperor and another

would be of little or no account. But it was an eclipse of those powers which had so long endeavoured to crush the cause of Christ. It is language applicable to the last judgment: and was to them actually a day of judgment in miniature. The bloody enemies of Christ must now have felt, whether they would or not, that they had incurred the wrath of the Lamb. Now the number of the martyrs under the Pagan persecutions is completed, and the prayers of the souls under the altar are answered.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE SEALING OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

Chap. vii.

And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,* 3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* 4 *And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* 5 *Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.* 6 *Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.* 7 *Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.* 8 *Of the tribe Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

This chapter is a continuation of the sixth seal; and bears a relation to the great revolution which had taken place by the accession of a Christian Emperor. Considering what the church had had to encounter under a succession of Heathens, this event

would appear to be most auspicious. Christians would now look forward to times of peace, happiness, and prosperity. And true it is, that during the life of this Emperor, there was not only a season of peace, but considerable accessions to the Christian profession. On this account, it seems, Mr. LOWMAN and others have been led to interpret this sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, of the numerous *conversions* made in those times to the Christian faith. But sealing denotes, not conversion, but the *preservation* of those who are converted. Those who were sealed did not by this *become* the servants of God, but are supposed to be such already. Instead of signifying the enlargement of the church, the object is to prevent it from being utterly swept away. It portends danger no less than the striking of the door-posts of the Israelites when the destroying angel should pass through the land; or than the marking of those who "sighed and cried" when Jerusalem was to be destroyed by the Chaldeans. It was for the *preservation* of a seed for God amidst a flood of corruption. Hence when these evils had actually deluged the church, we find the sealed servants of God standing in triumph upon Mount Sion.* God seeth not as man seeth: that which man is apt to think a great acquisition, God often knows to be a great temptation.

It is remarkable, that instead of a congratulation of the church on its recent victory, by the striking up of the heavenly choir, (as is usual in the prophecy when new and glorious events occur,) the choir on this occasion is mute. It is described, indeed, as a day of judgment to the persecuting Heathens, and in itself doubtless afforded matter of thankfulness to Christians; but had they known what would arise out of it, the joy of that day would have been turned into mourning.

From this time men were ripe for such speculations as those of *Arius*, who argued, *that if Christ was begotten of the Father, there must have been a time when he was not;* and for all the intrigues, wars, and persecutions, which on both sides by turns were practised. From this time our Lord's doctrine of the new birth seems in a manner to have been laid aside, and conversion to

* Chap. xiv. 1.

Christianity was little more than being baptized, or consenting to wear the Christian badge. From this time conversions were mostly produced by authority, or by the hope of worldly advantage, or by exhortations addressed to kings that they should convert their subjects. From this time the glory of the church seems to have been placed more in splendid edifices and pompous ceremonies, than in conformity to its head. In short, from this time she became a courtier, and laying aside her own simple garb, appeared in a dress more befitting the mother of harlots than the bride of Christ. "What she gained in outward splendour and prosperity, (says Mr. FABER,) she lost in purity of manners and doctrine. The holy simplicity of primitive Christianity was no more; and the heresy of *Arius* introduced a succession of crimes disgraceful alike to humanity and religion."*

Doubtless there were hypocrites, and merely nominal Christians in all ages of the church; but they were never before so designated as they now are. "The servants of God" are from this time distinguished from "the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads." This distinction might not take place immediately after the accession of Constantine, but from that time the seeds of it were sown. The alliance between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities described in the xiiith and xviith chapters by a woman riding on a beast, originated here. Here therefore we must look for the grand origin of that apostasy which the apostle Paul foretold, and which succeeding ages witnessed. If the account given of the state of things by MOSHEIM be just, it requires a great stretch of charity to believe that what was called the catholic church even in the fourth century was the church of Christ. Christ certainly had a people at that time, but they seem to have consisted of *individuals* rather than of that visible community which called itself the church. They were "the servants of God whom he sealed in their foreheads."

These ideas will be confirmed by attending to the manner in which the sealing of the servants of God is introduced. Four angels are seen "standing on the four corners of the earth."

* See MOSHEIM's Account of the Fourth Century.

Angels are the executioners of the Divine Providence. Their number answering to the four quarters of the earth may express its extending over the whole world. Their "holding the winds" would denote that they were commissioned of God to afflict the earth with evils, or to withhold them, according to his will. The short period in which they held back the winds seems to refer to that season of tranquility which the church enjoyed on the government's becoming Christian, and before the temptations of its new situation had had time to operate. Ver. 1, 2. But as the principal part of the commission of the four angels was to "hurt the earth and the sea," they stand ready, only waiting till the *greater* angel has sealed the servants of God, ere they execute it.

The "winds" which were to be let loose upon the earth and the sea, were *spiritual*, rather than temporal judgments, and would principally grow out of the new order of things: namely, errors, superstitions, corruptions, divisions, and a conformity to the manners and habits of the world. These were the winds which in the end swept away the great body of nominal Christians into the gulfs of Popery and Mahometanism. Ver. 3.

And as many of the symbols in the prophecy are taken from the *Jewish* temple, so the servants of God are symbolized by a certain number for an uncertain, taken from the twelve tribes of Israel. The Christian church being now the true "Israel of God," were to the apostate Christians what Israel was to an apostate world; namely, God's witnesses. Ver. 4—8.

9 *After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;* 10 *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* 11 *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,* 12 *Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever*

and ever. Amen. 13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* 14 *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* 14 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.* 16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.* 17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

After the sealing of God's servants is accomplished, the saints and martyrs of Jesus, who during the preceding persecutions had overcome, and been received into glory, joining with the whole heavenly chorus, engage in a triumphant song of praise to God and to the Lamb. The reason of their being here introduced seems to be that the sealed servants of God, who were yet on earth, and had to pass through a series of trials, might by a view of their happy end be strengthened to follow their example. As great *numbers* would be against them in this world, they are directed to view the numbers of friends which they have in heaven; who not only look back to their own deliverance, and ascribe it to God, but seem to look down to their brethren upon earth, and to say, "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering!"

The view of such a holy and happy assembly is supposed to excite in the apostle emotions of admiration and joy. On this one of the elders asks him what he conceives them to be; and whence they could come. It would seem as if they must be pure celestial beings, whose whole existence had been filled up with righteousness and blessedness. He does not presume however to say what he thought they were, whether men or angels, nor to offer any opinion as to whence they came; but modestly refers it to his instructor to inform him. The answer is, in effect, that they are men, men who were lately upon earth, exposed to great tribulations, but who had come out of them. And as to their "white robes," they had been once impure, but were washed and made

white, not in their own blood, though that in innumerable instances had been shed, but "in the blood of the Lamb." It was as believing in his death that they were justified and sanctified; and having lived by faith on him, they were without fault "before the throne of God."

Still more to stimulate the servants of God in this world to persevere, he adds, "And he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!"

DISCOURSE IX.

THE SUBDIVISION OF THE SEVENTH SEAL INTO SEVEN TRUMPETS.

Chap. viii.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 *And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.* 3 *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.* 4 *And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.* 5 *And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.* 6 *And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.*

We are now come to the opening of the last of the seven seals, and which is longer, and includes far more than the preceding six. They have reached but little beyond three hundred years; whereas this will reach from thence to the end of all things.

"Silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" seems to denote a solemn pause preparatory to other events. It is like saying, "And now prepare thee for another scene!" This scene is

"the appearence of seven angels standing before God, to whom were given seven trumpets." As nothing is said on the opening of the seventh seal but what follows under the trumpets, the latter must be considered as a subdivision of the former.

But prior to the sounding of the trumpets, "another angel" comes forward, and stands at the altar, "having a golden censer, to whom much incense is given, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne." There were two altars belonging to the temple-worship; one for sacrifice, called "the altar of burnt-offering," and the other for burning incense, called "the golden altar before the throne." The allusion here is to the last. Our great High Priest, having offered himself without spot to God, passed into the heavens, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Through him our prayers ascend with acceptance before God.

The "prayers" here referred to appear to have a special relation to the events about to be predicted by the sounding of the trumpets. The events would occur in answer to those prayers; which might be so many intercessions for the success of Christ's cause, and against that of its adversaries. Heathen Rome was overthrown in answer to the prayers of the souls under the altar, and Christian Rome may fall in the same manner. Should it be objected that in the latter there would be less to pray against, it may be answered, that those who, under the name of Christians, corrupted and debased Christianity, modelling it to their fleshly minds, and converting it into an engine of state policy, might incur more of the divine displeasure than those who, under the name of Heathens, openly opposed it. For the persecutions of Pagan Rome the persecutors only were punished, having their power taken from them, and given to the Christians; but for the corruptions of Christian Rome we shall see the empire itself dissolved, and divided amongst the barbarians.

The symbolical language under which these events are represented is that of the angel taking the censer, filling it with fire of the altar, and casting it into the earth; on which follow voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. "Fire" cast

into the earth by an angel would be the precursor of dreadful wars; and an "*earthquake*" is the well-known symbol of a revolution, or such an overturning in matters of government as should introduce a new order of things. Such were the events which distinguished the times between Constantine and Augustulus, especially those between the years 400 and 476. Whatever virtues attached to Constantine, or his successors, and whatever obligations the Christians were under for the protection afforded them by their government, yet the system which from those times was adopted, proved ruinous both to the church and to the empire. The corruptions of the former, as we have seen already, required the servants of God to be sealed in their foreheads; and the calamities of the latter we shall see described under the sounding of the first four trumpets.

7 *The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.* 8 *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;* 9 *And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.* 10 *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;* 11 *And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.* 12 *And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

The fulfilment of these predictions must, according to the chronological series of the prophecy, be looked for in the fourth or fifth centuries. They are the same things, particularly described, as those which followed the fire cast by the angel into the earth. Moreover, as the seals went to destroy the empire as Pagan, the

trumpets will go to overturn it as Christian. Both issue in an "earthquake,"* the ordinary symbol of a revolution.

The Roman empire, as being now the seat of Christianity, is here considered as a world of itself; having not only its earth, its sea, and its rivers, but its sun, and moon, and stars. By the *earth* we may understand those parts of the empire which were *continental*, as Gaul and the southern parts of Germany. On these fell the effects of the *first* trumpet, burning up the trees and the grass, or destroying great numbers among the middle and lower orders of men. By the *sea* we may understand those parts of the empire which were *maritime*, such as Spain, Portugal, and the lower parts of Italy. On these fell the effects of the *second* trumpet, turning the waters into blood, and destroying whatever was in them. By the *rivers and fountains of waters* may be understood the *mountainous* parts of the empire, as Upper Italy, and the countries about the Alps; at no great distance from which rise the Loire, the Po, the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Danube. On these fell the effects of the *third* trumpet, imparting to their streams a mortal bitterness. By the *sun, moon, and stars*, we may understand the governing powers, supreme and subordinate. On these fell the *fourth* trumpet, smiting them with darkness, or with a general eclipse. Finally, By *a third part* only being affected at once, may be meant, not only that the events should take place by several successive calamities; but that the effect of the whole would not be to *destroy* the western empire, but merely to *subvert* it. The empire was to continue, though under another form, namely, as composed of the ten kingdoms. Mr. Cunninghame very properly remarks the difference between the effects of the trumpets which refer to the *subversion* of the empire, and those of the vials, which refer to its *final dissolution*. The first are partial, the last total.†

Whether the events pertaining to each trumpet can be exactly ascertained, or not, thus much is certain, that the ravages of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, were that to the empire which

* Chap. vi. 12. with viii. 5. † Dissertation, pp. 80, 81.

a terrible hail-storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning, is to the "trees and the fields;" which a burning mountain, thrown into the sea, would be to the waters; and which a blazing meteor that should fall upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and embitter them, would be to a country; while the effects of these successive ravages on the government would resemble a great though not a total eclipse of the heavenly bodies.

APPENDIX TO DISCOURSE IX.

CONTAINING

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.

In the Northern and North-eastern parts of Europe, bordering on the Baltic and the Euxine Seas, there were many barbarous nations which were never subdued by the Roman arms: such were the Saxons, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Huns, the Alans, &c. and who were often associated in their enterprises. About the year 376, during the reign of the Eastern Emperor Valens, the Goths having been driven from their own country by the Huns and Alans a body of not less than 200,000 of them, besides women and children, under *Alavivus* and *Fritigern*, two of their chiefs, obtained permission to settle in Thrace, a province of the Roman empire. To the imprudence of admitting such a body of hostile emigrants, were added several instances of injurious treatment after their arrival. These first produced resistance, and that a battle, in which the Romans were defeated, and the emperor lost his life. By the prudent and energetic measures of Theodosius the great, who succeeded Valens, the Gothic emigrants were so far subjugated, as to be rendered serviceable to the empire. But after his death, the jealousies between Rufinus and Stilicho, ministers of state at Constantinople and Rome, under Arcadius and Honorius the emperors, afforded them opportunity to renew their hostilities.

Alaric, an Arian Christian, the successor of Fritigern, had been in the Roman service for several years, having commanded a body of his countrymen in the wars of Theodosius : but thinking himself not sufficiently rewarded by that prince, and perceiving as he thought a fair opportunity, he was disposed to carve for himself. To this he is said to have been encouraged by Rufinus, principal ruler under Arcadius at Constantinople, whose duty it was to oppose him. Marching his army into Macedonia and Thessaly, he laid waste the country as he went. Through the treachery of Rufinus the straits of Thermopylæ were left unguarded, and so opened a free passage for him into Greece ; where the villages were plundered and burnt, the males who were capable of bearing arms massacred, and the females led captive. His successes obtained for him a command in the eastern empire, which having improved to the strengthening of his own army, he resolved to invade that of the west. Having laid waste Epirus and Pannonia, he in 402 entered Italy. Italy however was for this time delivered from his depredations. The Romans under Stilicho, after twice defeating him, suffered him to quit the country, with the remnant of his army.

In 406 another vast army, composed of Goths, Huns, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Alani, &c. under *Radagaisus*, a heathen, attempted the invasion of Italy. The number of fighting men is said to have been 200,000, besides slaves, women, and children, who are reckoned to have amounted to as many more. But neither were they successful. Radagaisus was defeated and slain, and a great part of his army either perished, or were sold for slaves.

But though the capital of the western empire was by these events once more saved, yet its provinces were reduced to desolation. Gaul was at this time invaded by the *Vandals*, the *Suevi*, the *Alani*, and the *Burgundians*, who, with the remains of Radagaisus's army, destroyed all before them. " On the last day of the year, (says *Gibbon*,) when the waters of the Rhine were probably frozen, they entered without opposition the defenceless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, *who never afterwards retreated*, may

be considered as the fall of the Roman empire in the countries beyond the Alps ; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth, were from tha fatal moment levelled with the ground.—The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber, with elegant houses, and well cultivated farms. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert ; and the prospect of the smoaking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed ; and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege ; Strasburgh, Spires, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, and Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke ; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the seventeen provinces of Gaul That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrennees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars."*

Thus far events appear to answer to the " hail and fire mingled with blood" under the *first* trumpet, which, as they are said to be on the *earth*, correspond with the calamities which in those times were brought upon the *continental* parts of the empire.

Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, had made peace with the emperor Honorius, and been made Master General of the Roman armies in Illyricum. In the invasion of Radagaisus he took no part but was attentive to the recruiting of his own army. In 408 he made large demands on the Roman Government, accompanied with intimations of what would follow if they were not complied with. Stilicho persuaded the senate to comply with them, and four thousand pounds of gold were promised him under the name of a subsidy. But before the promise was fulfilled, Stilicho was disgraced and slain. Of the measures of his successors, Alaric is said to have had just cause of complaint. The result was, he determined

* Decline of Roman Empire, Chap. XXX.

again to invade Italy. Passing over the Alps he pillaged the cities of Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia, and Cremona, which yielded to his arms; increased his forces by the accession of 30,000 auxiliaries; and without opposition marched to the gates of Rome. Here, encompassing the city, he reduced it to a state of famine, of which many thousands died. To this succeeded a destructive pestilence. At length the siege was raised on a large sum of money being paid him: but his terms of peace being rejected by Honorius, who had shut himself up in Ravenna, Rome was a second time besieged. After this it was taken, and for three days given up to the plunder of the besiegers. Vast numbers of the Romans were slain, not only by the Goths, but by their own slaves, 40.000 of whom being liberated, fell upon their masters.

About ten months before this terrible calamity on Rome and the lower parts of Italy, by the Goths, Spain and Portugal were invaded by the *Vandals*, the *Suevi*, and the *Alani*. These nations had already desolated Gaul, from whence passing over the Pyrennees they conquered the peninsula. *Echard* says, "The Vandals took Galicia, where they settled; the Suevi pushed their conquests farther; and the Alani fixed themselves in Portugal and Andalusia. From these barbarians, (he adds,) descended the ancient kings of Spain."

The calamities of this invasion are thus decribed by *Gibbon* from a Spanish Historian. "The barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on the fortunes of the Romans and Spaniards, and ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-creatures: and even the wild beasts that multiplied without control in the desert were exasperated, by the taste of blood and the impatience of hunger, boldly to attack and devour their human prey. Pestilence soon appeared, the inseparable companion of famine; a large proportion of the people was swept away; and the groans of the dying excited only the envy of their surviving friends. At length, the barbarians, satiated with carnage and rapine, and afflicted by the contagious evils which

they themselves had introduced, fixed their permanent seats in the depopulated country."*

These events seem to answer to the "burning mountain cast into the sea," causing a third part of it to become blood, and destroying a third part of all which were in it, as described under the *second* trumpet. If Ætna or Vesuvius had literally been thrown into the ocean, it could hardly have produced a greater effervescence among the waters than these things produced among the nations. The *sea* would also have a special reference to these calamities being brought upon the *maritime* parts of the empire.

After this the empire received another mighty shock from the *Scythians*, or *Huns*, a heathen nation, more barbarous and cruel than either the Goths or Vandals. *Attila*, their king and commander, was distinguished by his ferocity; affecting to be called "the scourge of God," and declaring that "the grass would never grow upon those places where his horse had trodden!" About 441, he fell upon the eastern empire, where, bearing down all before him, the country was in a manner destroyed by fire and sword. *Gibbon* says, "The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles, from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded and occupied, and desolated by him." The government at Constantinople, after seventy cities had been rased to the ground, was compelled ignominiously to purchase his retreat.

In the year 450 Attila again declared war against both the eastern and western empires. He was defeated in Gaul with a loss (says *Echard*) of 170,000 men; yet in the following year he invaded Italy with a larger army than that with which he had entered Gaul. *Aquileia*, after a seige of three months, was taken, and so effectually destroyed that the succeeding generation could scarcely discover its ruins. After this *Verona*, *Mantua*, *Padua*, and many other cities, shared the same fate; the men were slain, the women ravished, and the places reduced to ashes. These devastations, however, were confined to those parts of Italy which border on the Alps. Attila threatened Rome, but was induced,

* Gibbon's Roman History, Chap. XXXI.

partly by fear of the Roman army, partly by the remonstances of his own, and partly by the embassy of Leo the Roman Pontiff, to forego the attempt, and returning into his own country, he shortly after ended his days.

This surely must be the "great star burning as it were a lamp;" which followed the sounding of the *third* trumpet and which shooting like a fiery meteor from east to west, and falling upon the rivers and fountains of waters, impregnated the streams with a mortal bitterness. If the rivers and fountains denote, as has been supposed, the *mountainous* parts of the empire, whence they have their origin, the facts have a remarkable coincidence with the prediction.

As to the remainder of the history, every thing from this time went to *eclipse* the imperial government. Africa, Spain, Britain, the greatest part of Gaul, Germany, and Illyricum, are said to have been dismembered from the empire; the court was full of intrigues and murders; Valentinian the emperor ravished the wife of Maximus, one of his senators; Maximus in return got Valentinian murdered, usurped his throne, and compelled Eudoxia the Empress to marry him; Eudoxia in hatred to the usurper invited *Genseric* the Vandal to come over from Africa and revenge the death of Valentinian; Genseric prepared to invade Italy; Maximus on hearing it, instead of taking measures for repelling him, sunk into despondency; the senators stoned him to death, and threw his body into the Tiber; Genseric entered Rome without opposition, and gave it up to be sacked and plundered by the soldiers for fourteen days. From hence, as Bishop Newton observes, "the western empire struggled hard, and gasped as it were for breath through eight short and turbulent reigns, for the space of twenty years, and at length expired in the year 476 under Momyllus, or Augustulus, as he was named in derision, being a diminutive of Augustus."

After this Odoacer, king of the Ostrogoths, invaded the country, and siezed the government, which he held however, not as head of the western empire, but merely as *King of Italy*. There were

Thus it was, I conceive, that the eclipse of the sun, moon, and stars, as described under the *fourth* trumpet, was accomplished. It may be thought that these events *had too slight a relation to the church of Christ* to become the subject of prophecy: two things, however, may be alleged in answer. *First*, They were necessary for the accomplishment of other prophecies, particularly Dan. vii. 7, 8. 2 Thes. ii. 7. Hereby a way was made for the beast to have "ten horns," as after the overthrow of the empire it was divided into so many independent kingdoms, which with little variation continue to this day. Hereby also a way was made for the "little horn" of Daniel's fourth beast, or the papal antichrist to come amongst them; or, as the apostle expresses it, for the man of sin to be revealed. "The mystery of iniquity hath already begun to work, (saith he,) only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked (one) be revealed." While the imperial authority continued, there was not sufficient scope for ecclesiastical ambition; but when this was removed, the other soon appeared in its true character. The Goths, embracing the *religion* of the conquered Romans, the clergy became objects of superstitious veneration amongst a barbarous people, and of which they availed themselves to the establishing of their spiritual authority. From hence the See of Rome made no scruple of setting up for supremacy.

Secondly, In these judgments upon the empire we perceive the Divine displeasure for its having corrupted the Christian religion, and transformed it into an engine of state. The wars of the Assyrians and Babylonians were the scourges of God on those who had corrupted the true religion; and such were those of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, on the Christian governments of the fourth and fifth centuries.

DISCOURSE X.

THE FIRST WOE-TRUMPET; OR THE SMOKE AND LOCUSTS.

Chap. viii. 13. ix. 1—12.

As the first four trumpets were connected in their objects, so are the last three. The last verse of the eighth chapter is introductory to them.

13 *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.*

"This solemn denunciation seems to be introduced for the purpose of drawing our attention to the great importance of the events which were to happen under the last three trumpets. It serves also as a chronological mark to show that these three trumpets are all posterior to the first four, not only in order, but in time; and that they belong to a new series of events."* The most distinguished plagues which were to befall the church and the world are designated by them. The first two seem to refer to the prevalence of Popery and Mahometanism, and the last to those vials of wrath which should effect their overthrow.

1 *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.* 2 *And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air*

* Cunninghame's Dissertation, p. 84.

were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.* 4 *And it was commanded that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.* 5 *And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.* 6 *And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.* 7 *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.* 8 *And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.* 9 *And they had breast-plates as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.* 10 *And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.* 11 *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.* 12 *One woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter.*

The fifth or first woe-trumpet is short but awfully impressive. Looking at this dreadful irruption of darkness and desolation, we perceive the necessity there was for "sealing the servants of God in their foreheads," that they might be preserved amidst these trying times. These are the "winds," which those ministers of vengeance to whom it was given to hurt the earth, (Chap. vii. 1, 2.) at length let loose upon it. The professing Christian world being exceedingly corrupt, it became necessary to try them. The "sealed" servants of God would endure the trial; but "those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads" would be carried away and perish.

That the locusts refer to the ravaging hordes of Saracens, who, with Mahomet at their head, subdued and destroyed the eastern part of Christendom, seems to be generally admitted; and some have considered the "smoke" as denoting his false doctrine, and

the "star" which fell from heaven to the earth as meaning himself. But on the most mature consideration, I concur with those expositors, who, while admitting the locusts to be Mahomet's destructive hordes of Saracens, yet understand the smoke of *popish* darkness, which was preparatory to the other, and the fallen star of the fallen Bishop of Rome.* If the fourth trumpet refer to the subversion of the imperial government under Augustulus, it may be presumed that the fifth would refer to things not very distant from it, and probably rising out of it: but the appearance of Mahomet was 130 years after this event, and seems to have no immediate connexion with it. On the other hand, there is a connexion between the subversion of the imperial government and "the revelation of the man of sin." It was the imperial authority which "let" or hindered him, and which when "taken out of the way," made room for his appearing.† Thus the eclipse under the fourth trumpet prepared the way for the irruption of darkness under the fifth. The mystery of iniquity had long been at work; but now it burst forth as the smoke of a great furnace, impeding the light of the gospel, and darkening the moral atmosphere of the Christian world.

With this also agrees the application of "the fallen star" to the Pope or Bishop of Rome. It comports with the symbolical style of the book that a prophetical person should denote not an individual, but a succession of individuals in an official character. The Bishop of Rome was once a star in the Christian firmament; but abandoning the doctrine and spirit of a Christian minister, and setting up for worldly domination, he "fell from heaven unto the earth," and thus became a fit agent for "opening the bottomless pit." The Bishop of Meaux acknowledges that "Hell does not open of itself: it is always some false doctor that opens it."

*It is true, that that part of the prophecy which treats *directly* of the great papal community is yet in reserve: but as in a history of any nation frequent mention requires to be made of other nations; so in a prophecy of the ravages of Mahometanism, mention may require to be made of Popery, as preparing its way.

†2 Thes. ii. 4—8.

The *darkness* of Popery is not only of infernal origin, but brings with it a state of mind prepared for the grossest delusions. Intercepting the light of truth, it darkened the world with its doctrines. It changed the truth of God into a lie, and, like an old Heathenism, "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen!" Wherefore God gave them up to Mahometan imposture, depredation, and ruin. As the smoke brought forth the locusts, (though both proceeded from the pit,) so Popery brought forth Mahometanism.* But for the one, the other could not have prevailed as it did where the light of the gospel had once appeared. The Roman Catholics have made great noise about the keys; and truly a key has been given them, "the key of the bottomless pit!"

As to the *locusts* they are described chiefly by their *depredations.* The wrath of God is less directed against them than against that out of which they came. They were indeed *from beneath*, and so was the conquering system of Assyria and Babylon; but as these powers were the rod of God's anger against a nation which had corrupted the true religion, it is not till they in their turn are punished that much is said of their crimes. And thus the destructive hordes of Saracens that laid waste a great part of the eastern world are described as executing a commission, not against "grass or green things, or trees," like ordinary locusts; but, "against the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads"—that is, against the corrupters of Christianity. Ver. 4. There was a *direction* given to their successes very much like that which has of late years been given to those on the continent of Europe against the papal countries. The Christianity of the Greek church, whose patriarch resided at Constantinople, was in a great degree absorbed by them.

It is observable, however, that the men against whom their commission was directed were not to be *killed*, but tormented for a certain time. They doubtless did kill great numbers *individually* considered; but with all their ravages they only harrassed those countries where corrupted Christianity prevailed. They were not able to destroy either the Greek or the Latin churches.

* See Mr. Cunninghame's Dissertation on the Trumpets, Chap. VI.

The *time* in which they should harrass them is limited to "five months," which probably alludes to the usual season for the ravages of the natural locusts. It has been thought to intend so many prophetical days, or years. Five months, reckoning thirty days to a month, and each day a year, would be 150 years; and this was the period in which the Saracen arms are said to have prevailed. They began about 612. After the death of Mahomet, they continued, though with some interruptions, to carry on their conquests. In 713 they entered Spain, which in a few years was subjugated to them; and passing the Pyrenees, they entered France, which was then said to be the only rampart of Christianity. They advanced as to a certain victory, whereupon ensued one of the bloodiest battles that the world had ever seen. Of the Saracens there were 400,000 men, besides women and children who came with them, designing to settle in France, and no doubt to extirpate Christianity from Europe. *Three hundred and seventy thousand* of them are said to have been slain, including their General. This battle was fought by *Charles Martel*, the grandfather of Charlemagne, in 734, and put a stop to the progress of the Saracen arms in Europe. About 762, after the "five months" of years which were given them to continue had elapsed, they ceased to extend their conquests by settling peaceably in the countries which they had conquered, and so ceased to ravage as locusts.

The *description* given of these locusts (ver. 7—10.) answers to most of the peculiarities of the Saracen armies; as their use of cavalry; their turbans, resembling crowns, in which they gloried; the union of fierceness and effeminacy in their character; the impenetrability of their forces; the rapidity of their conquests; and their carrying with them the sting of a deadly imposture.

Finally, This fearful army is described as having "a king over them, even the angel of the bottomless pit," from whence they came, and "whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, but in the Greek, Apollyon." This would seem to be Mahomet and his successors, or Satan as working by them. The genius of Mahometanism is to *destroy* the lives as well as the souls of men.

After this we are told, "One woe is past: and behold there come two woes more hereafter." By the term "hereafter,"

seems to be intimated that the second woe would not follow very soon after the first, but that a considerable lapse of time would intervene betwixt them. In this respect the language differs from the introduction of the third woe, in Chap. xi. 14. where it is said, "The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh *quickly*."

DISCOURSE XI.

THE SECOND WOE-TRUMPET; OR THE ARMY OF HORSEMEN.

Chap. ix. 13—21.

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, 14 *Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.* 15 *And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.* 16 *And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.* 17 *And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.* 18 *By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.* 19 *For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.* 20 *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.* 21 *Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

We here enter on the sixth, or second woe-trumpet, which, embracing different cotemporary events, may be expected to require several discourses. That part of it which we are now upon contains a description of the revival of the Mahometan desolations by the *Turks*, in the thirteenth and following centuries. It will be recollected that the second woe was not to come quickly, but "hereafter." Such was the fact. Several centuries elapsed between the ravages of the Saracens and those of the Turks. But as the desolations wrought by the followers of Mahomet, whether Saracens or Turks, would be less injurious to the cause of Christ than the abomination of Popery, there is not only much less said of them than of the other, but what is said is finished before the other is particularly begun, that the thread of the principal subject might not be broken. There is no reason to think that the Turkish wars would have occupied a place in scripture prophecy, but for their being the appointed means of crushing a corrupt part of the Christian church. For these reasons I question the propriety of calling the Mahometan power *the eastern antichrist.* There is no doubt of its being *opposed* to Christ, and the same may be said of Heathenism : but *nothing is called antichrist in the scriptures which makes no profession of being on the side of Christ.* If there were an eastern antichrist, it was that community which the Mahometans destroyed, namely, "the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads."

The leading facts corresponding with this part of the prophecy were as follows.—The Turks, a people who in the ninth century had migrated from the neighbourhood of Mount Caucasus, and settled in Armenia Major, by the eleventh century became formidable to their neighbours. They consisted of *four* Sultanies, the seats of which were at *Bagdad*, *Damascus*, *Aleppo*, and *Iconium* ; all in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates. Their principal struggles were with the eastern Roman empire, or the Christians of the Greek church. For about two centuries their ambition was restrained, partly it may be by the European crusades, or what were called *the holy wars*, for the recovery of Jerusalem : but the disasters which attended these undertakings induced the European princes at length to relinquish them ; they were then at liberty to

pursue their objects. In 1281 they obtained a decided victory over the eastern Christians; and in 1299 a new empire was founded by *Othman*, composed of the four Turkish Sultanies, which still subsists, and is called after his name, the *Ottoman* empire. During the fourteenth century their successes continued. In the middle of the fifteenth, (1453,) Constantinople was taken, the eastern Roman empire fell, and with it the Greek church, neither of which, except in the religion of the latter being embraced by the Russians, has since lifted up its head.

The "four angels" then denote the four Turkish governments near the Euphrates. These are called angels, as being *messengers* of wrath, commissioned to destroy the corrupt Christians of the East. The "loosing of them refers to the removal of those obstructions which for a time impeded their progress. The "voice" which ordered them to be loosed proceeding from the "four horns of the golden altar," signifies that these judgments, like those in Chap. viii. 3—5., would be in answer to the prayers of the saints: or, perhaps, as Bp. Newton says, "intimating that the sins of men must have been very great, when the altar, which was their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance." Their continuance "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year," reckoning by prophetic time, includes 391 years; which beginning from 1281, the year of their first victory over the eastern Roman empire, extends to 1672, the year of their last victory over the Poles; from which period they have been sinking into such disorder and imbecility as to forebode their ruin. Their armies being described as "horsemen," answers to the numerous cavalry of the Turks. The number of them, consisting of "myriads of myriads," shows the vast armies which they brought into the field. "Breastplates of fire, of jacinth, and of brimstone," may denote the glittering harness with which the horses were caparisoned. Their "heads being as the heads of lions," is expressive of their strength and fierceness. "Fire, and smoke, and brimstone, issuing out of their mouths," seems to allude to the use of gunpowder in war, which began about this period. Great guns were used in the taking of Constantinople in 1453. The symbol is expressive of what a body of horsemen, fighting

with fire-arms, would appear to a distant spectator, who had never before seen or heard of any thing of the kind.

There is one remarkable difference between the *locusts* and the *horsemen :* the former were not commissioned to *kill*, but merely to *torment ;* whereas of the latter it is said, " By these were the third part of men *killed*, even by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths." They both, doubtless, killed men as individuals ; but the latter only were permitted to kill those *political bodies* to which the prophecy refers. The eastern Roman empire, and the Greek church as connected with it, fell not by the Saracens of the eighth, but by the Turks of the fifteenth century. Finally, Their " power was in their *mouth*, and in their *tails*." Now as the fire, and smoke, and brimstone, are said to issue from the former, they would seem to denote their artillery ; and as in respect of the latter they resemble the locusts, these are the destructive *principles* which they propagate by the sword in common with the Saracens. Mahometanism was that to the Christian church in the east, which Assyria and Babylon were to Samaria and Jerusalem. Its first appearance in the seventh and eighth centuries was a judgment upon them for having corrupted the Christian doctrine and worship ; but as a body it went only to " torment" them, not to " kill" them. It said, *Repent, or I will remove thy candlestick out of his place !* But they repented not. Its last appearance, therefore, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, carried the threatening into execution. The candlestick of the eastern church was removed, and her children were killed with death !

But that which is the most remarkable is the effect, or rather, the want of effect which these terrible judgments had on those, who survived them. " The *rest of the men*, (that is of the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads,) who were not killed by these plagues, repented not." As those that were killed were the eastern Roman empire, with the Greek church as connected with it ; so those that were not killed were the western Roman empire, with the Latin church. These two churches were as *Aholah* and *Aholibah*. The fall of the one ought to have been a warning to the other : but it was not. They persisted in their

image-worship, which was only the old idolatry of the Pagans under a new form: nor were they behind them in their murderous persecutions, their foul impostures, their filthy intrigues, and their fraudulent impositions. And though soon after the overthrow of the Greek church, the Reformation began, yet they reformed not. The Council of Trent, which was called on this occasion, sat eighteen years, and at last left things as they found them. Babylon was not to be healed!

DISCOURSE XII.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WESTERN OR PAPAL APOSTASY.

Chap. x.

The eastern church, as connected with the Roman empire, being slain, the remainder of the prophecy may be expected to concern the *western*, or, "the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues." This it does; so much of it however, as brings us to the taking of the beasts and of the false prophet, and so to the commencement of the Millennium. The corruptions of the western church have been intimated before; as by the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, Chap. vii.; by the judgments inflicted on the western empire under the first four trumpets, Chap. viii.; and by the cloud of smoke from the bottomless pit: but now the prophecy treats directly and exclusive of them. Nor is it surprising that the apostasy of this church should occupy so large a part of the prophecy,* insomuch as both for its duration and mischievous effects, there is nothing equal to it under the gospel dispensation. The period allotted for its duration is no less than 1260 years; during which the holy city is trodden under foot, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, the true church fleeth into the wilderness, and the saints of the Most High are persecuted to death by a ferocious and cruel beast. This apostate church was, no doubt, *the man of sin* foretold by Paul; and notwithstanding what has been advanced against it by a late re-

* From the beginning of Chap. x. to the end of Chap. xix.

spectable writer, I have no doubt of its being the *antichrist* which the Christians in John's time had *heard should come.**

Before we enter upon this subject it will be proper to give the outlines of the ten chapters in which it is contained. Chap. x. I consider as mere introductory. Chap. xi. gives a general representation of this corrupt and persecuting power, with the state of the church of Christ under it, during the 1260 years. Chap. xii. gives a second, and Chap. xiii. and xiv. a third general representation of it during the same period. Chap. xv. and xvi. give a more particular account of that part of the subject which commences at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and contains a subdivision of that trumpet into seven vials, the pouring out of which brings us down to the Millennium. The xviith, xviiith, and xixth Chapters contain what in modern publications we should call *notes of illustration*, giving particular accounts of things which before had only been generally intimated.

We are not to expect the events relating to the western church to follow the conclusion of those of the eastern, *in order of time*. In tracing the issue of the one, we were led almost down to the times of the Reformation; but in taking up the other we must expect to go many centuries back again. It is in prophecy as it is in history, when describing cotemporary events: the writer having gone through one series, returns and takes up the other. It is thus in

* This appears to be evidently made out by *Mr. Scott*, in his notes on 2 Thes. ii. 3—12. and 1 John ii. 18. As to its being a character of antichrist that he "denieth the Father and the Son," (ver. 22.) it is of the antichrists *already come* that this is spoken, who had professed Christianity, and whose apostasy consisted not in a disavowal of the name of Christ, but of certain Christian doctrines, which included a *virtual* denial of Jesus being the Christ, as that also was a virtual denial of the Father. Had these "forerunners of antichrist," as Mr. Scott very properly calls them, been avowed infidels, they could not have been *seducers* to the churches of Christ (ver. 26.); a name given to false teachers. Such were those *deceivers* in 2 John 7. who, by denying the real humanity of Christ, denied his being come in the flesh. But if a *virtual* denial of the Father and the Son rendered those who were *already come* antichrists, there is no reason why it should not do the same of *him that should come*. It is not probable that John would have allowed "the man of sin" to acknowledge either the Father or the Son, while he usurped the place of both.

the history of Judah and Israel in the Second Book of Kings; with this difference, that in carrying on those histories together, the writer went through only a single reign of one of them ere he returned to the other; whereas in this the overthrow of the eastern church is completed before the account of the western is begun. The former brought us down to the fifteenth century; the latter, when tracing the origin of things, may glance at events as early as the fourth.

1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.* 2 *And he had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,* 3 *And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.* 4 *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.* 5 *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,* 6 *And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:* 7 *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.* 8 *And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.* 9 *And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.* 10 *And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.* 11 *And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

The "mighty angel" appears by his description to be the Son of God himself, and this may indicate the importance of the vision. His being "clothed with a cloud" may express the concealment of his designs, and the hiding of his power. He could have crushed this great conspiracy at the outset, but he did not. The "rainbow on his head" is the sign of peace, or of covenant mercy, and may here denote that whatever evils might be permitted in order to try the church, yet there should not be such a deluge as to destroy it. His countenance being compared to "the sun," and his feet to "pillars of fire," may intimate, that neither is his glory tarnished, nor his majesty diminished, by all the corruptions which are introduced under his name. Finally, His "coming down from heaven" seems to denote a change of scene. The Lamb's company stand upon Mount Sion; but the harlot sitteth upon the waters, and the beast riseth out of the sea. Thus as the subject respects the same apostate community, the scene is the earth, and the angel descends from heaven to disclose it.

The "little book" which the angel held open in his hand relates doubtless to the western apostasy. It has been thought to be a kind of *Appendix*, or *Codicil* to the sealed book, and a part of what follows to be *chapters* of it. But this seems too much: for if so, it would not properly belong to the sealed book, whereas all that pertains to the apostasy, and to the state of the church to the end of the world, belongs to the trumpets, which trumpets are a subdivision of the seventh seal. It is not therefore, any thing *added* to the sealed book but a marked division of it, a book as it were within a book.—The Angel's setting "his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth," would express his absolute dominion over both. His "crying with a loud voice as when a lion roareth," was awfully preparatory to the seven thunders which immediately uttered their voices. On hearing them, John was about to write, but is told by a voice from heaven to "seal up the things which the thunders uttered, and write them not." The thunders then were not mere sounds but certain "things," which though they were not at present to be disclosed, yet in due time should be fulfilled. Their fulfilment too, was an object of such importance, and lay so near the angel's heart, that

with the utmost indignation he sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that *there should be no delay;* but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he should begin to sound, they should be accomplished.*

From these considerations it appears plain that the seven thunders relate to the same "things" as those which are afterwards disclosed under the seven vials. They both express the wrath of God against the papal antichrist; the one describes it only in general, and that in the form of *threatenings*, the other descends to particulars, and describes it as *actually executing*. The thunders being introduced before the prophetic account of the apostasy, may denote the displeasure of God against it from its very beginning, and tend to support the faith and patience of the church under it.

The forbidding the apostle to write, and commanding him to eat the book seems like saying,—'The apostasy is not yet ripe. The wrath of God against it will be deferred for the present. Under the sounding of the seventh angel he will pour fourth the vials of

* Whether οτι χρονος ουκ εσται ετι be rendered, as in our version, *that there should be time no longer;* or more literally, as by Mr. DAUBUZ and others, *that the time shall not be yet;* or, as Dr. GILL says the words will bear to be rendered, *that there should be delay no longer;* the meaning cannot be that time itself should then be at an end. Nor does it seem to be an object of sufficient importance for an oath, that the time for the seven thunders to be executed *should not be yet.* It is not their not being yet, but their being at the appointed time: not the protraction, but the accomplishment *notwithstanding the protraction*, to which the angel swears. There is a manifest reference in the passage to Dan. xii. 7. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." It was of the papal antichrist, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes was a type, that the man clothed in linen spake, and of him speaks the angel to John. As the former predicts his fall, so does the latter; and as Antiochus had been permitted to scatter the power of the holy people for a time, times, and half a time, so should antichrist be permitted to scatter the church of Christ for the same prophetic period, reckoning a year for a day; that is, for the space of 1260 years. See *Prideaux's Connexion*, Part II. Book III. at the close.

his indignation upon it. At present, therefore, write it not; but receive a general impression of things by eating the book!' The allusion doubtless is to Ezek. iii. 1—3, and denotes that he must understand and digest its contents. The book, he was told, would be sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly. The same desire of understanding the future state of the church which made him weep when no one was found worthy to open the sealed book, must make him rejoice when an open book was put into his hand, with a direction to eat it: but when he came to digest it, and to perceive the corruptions and persecutions that should prevail, and for so long a period retard the progress of the gospel, it would be grievous to him.

To teach him that what he had now seen and done was designed only as a general impression, preparatory to what should follow, he is given to understand that he must go over the ground "again," writing prophecies which respect to many "peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPAL APOSTASY, AND OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH UNDER IT.

Chap. xi. &c.

I CONCEIVE with Mr. LOWMAN, that the following chapters contain three general descriptions of the papal antichrist, and of the state of the church under it; only he confines them to the xith, xiith, and xiiith Chapters, whereas it appears to me that the xiiith and xivth should not be divided, but considered as containing between them the third general description. The reasons for considering these four chapters not as one continued prophecy, but as general representations of the events of the same period, are the following:

First, The events foretold by the slaughter and resurrection of the witnesses in Chap. xi.; by the flight of the woman into the wilderness, and the victory over the dragon in Chap. xii.; with the ravages of the beasts, and the triumph of the Lamb's company in Chapters xiii. and xiv. are the same.—*Secondly*, These representations are not confined to one or two trumpets, but comprehend the times of the greater part of them. Some of the things represented, particularly those at the beginning of Chap. xii. in which the origin of the apostasy is traced, appear to go back to the times of the first four trumpets, namely, to the fourth and fifth centuries: others, particularly those at the close of Chapters xi.

and xiv., which describe the overthrow of the apostate church, go forward to the times of the last trumpet, and even of the last vials, into which that trumpet is subdivided. This will be evident by comparing Chapter xi. 19. with Chap. xvi. 18. In both mention is made of "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail;" both therefore manifestly refer to the same events.—*Thirdly*, In each of these descriptions there is a reference to the 1260 years, the period which in prophecy marks the duration of the antichristian power. So long were the witnesses to prophecy in sackloth, so long the woman to be in the wilderness, and so long the beast to make war with the saints. It is therefore to the events of this period that these chapters relate; containing an account of the rise, the reign, and the overthrow of the papal antichrist.

It could hardly be expected that so long a period, embracing such multifarious characters and events, events too which so deeply interest the church of God, should be passed over without particular notice. The sacred writer is as it were made to pause, and to give us several distinct views of the subject according to the different lights in which he beheld it. I only add, if these chapters do really comprehend the events of the 1260 years, we might almost presume, in going over them, to meet with something under each description relating to so distinguished an event as the *Reformation*, and must certainly have thrice to cross the meridian of our own times.

The first of these general descriptions, which we now enter upon, does not appear to trace the origin of the apostasy, but to take it up from the time in which things were so matured, that in taking the measurement of God's temple, the papal community was ordered to be left out, as not belonging to it.

1 *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.* 2 *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

The language no doubt is Jewish, but the doctrine, worship, and worshippers of the *Christian* church are intended. Christianity, having become the religion of the state, abounded with converts; but such would be their character, and such the kind of religion they would introduce, that the extent of the church would require to be contracted. The outer court, containing the body of the worshippers must be left out. That which had been known by the name of the Catholic Church must be given up as idolaters; and thus the profanation of the temple by Antiochus would be acted over again.*

3 *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.* 4 *These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.* 5 *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.* 6 *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

The import of these verses is, that during the long period of papal corruption and persecution, God would have his faithful witnesses who should bear testimony against it, though it were in sackcloth. As in the language of the prophecy a king denotes not an individual monarch, but a succession of kings, or a kingdom,

* "Our Reformers, (says Mr. FABER,) never thought of unchurching the Church of Rome, though they freely declared it to have *erred*. Hence, while they rejected its abominations, they did not scruple to derive from it their episcopal and sacredotal ordination." Vol. II. p. 3. Note.

The English Reformers might allow the Church of Rome to be a true Church of Christ; but do the scriptures support them in this concession? The Church of Rome was once a part of God's temple; but from hence it is left out of the measurement. Instead of being "the holy city," it is a body of idolaters who tread it under foot. It is not Zion, but Babylon. Some of God's people might be found in her, but they are commanded to come out of her. She is not the bride, the Lamb's wife, but the mother of harlots. Finally, if the Church of Rome continued to be a Church of Christ, what must that Church be who fled from her persecutions into the wilderness?

so by "two witnesses" we are doubtless to understand not two individual witnesses, but a competent succession of them. This is manifest from their continuing through the long period of 1260 years, which can only be true of a succession of men. Some have supposed them to be the Old and New Testaments, others the Old and New Testament churches; but I see no reason why they should not be understood of the faithful servants of Christ who *during this period* would bear witness for the truth. It is of the *true church*, as opposed to the *false*, that the other general descriptions speak; namely, of the woman and her seed who fled into the wilderness, and of the Lamb's company as opposed to that of the beast: I conclude therefore that such are the two witnesses in this.

Moreover, The correspondence of 1260 days, in which they should prophesy, with the "time, times, and the dividing of time," in Daniel, (Chap. vii. 25.) not only determines the general application of the prophecy, but the parties concerned in both to be the same. In the latter end of the fourth or Roman government, according to Daniel, a little horn should grow up among the ten horns, that should "wear out *the saints of the Most High*, until a time, times, and the dividing of time." According to John, the witnesses during the same period should prophesy in sackcloth, and be persecuted and slain. The *witnesses* of John, therefore, and the *saints* of Daniel, are the same.

These two witnesses are said to be "the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth." The olive-trees and the candlestick of Zechariah, to which there is a manifest reference, were not the same. The former supplied the latter, or the two sides of the bowl of it, with oil. The candlestick seems to have signified the church, and the olive-trees the prophets of God who were with the builders, helping them. Ezra v. 2. Corresponding with this, the olive-trees of John are faithful ministers, and the candlesticks Christian churches. The same prophesying which bears witness against the corruptions of antichrist, supplies the friends of Christ as with fresh oil, and enables them to shine as lights in the world. Both the olive-

trees and the candlesticks in different ways are witnesses to the truth.

The "fire that proceedeth out of their mouth" denotes the divine threatenings to which those who reject their testimony are exposed. In this way all who have perseveringly set themselves against the truth of God, have been slain by it; not only as incurring the wrath to come, but spiritual judgments even in this life: such are blindness of mind and hardness of heart, the most awful and sure presages of eternal death.

Their having "power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will," denotes the influence of prayer when presented in faith and in conformity to the will of God. There is a reference, no doubt, to the prayer of Elijah against apostate Israel, which prayer was answered with a dearth; but without any thing properly miraculous, the prayers of God's suffering servants may draw down both temporal and spiritual judgments on persecuting nations. The terrible things which God is now in righteousness inflicting on the nations, may be in answer to the prayers of his servants of former ages, who century after century have been crying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them dwell on the earth!" Such cries enter the ears of the Lord of Hosts, and must be answered.

APPENDIX

TO

DISCOURSE XIII.

The history of the witnesses prior to the eleventh and twelfth centuries is difficult to be traced, owing to the want of materials; and during those centuries, almost all the accounts that we have of them are from the pens of their persecutors, who have not failed to transmit their memory to posterity in the most odious colours. That some who in church history are deemed heretics were really such, need not be questioned; but let any serious Christian read the church history of Mosheim; and unless he can find a portion of true religion under the article of "heresies and heretics that disturbed the peace of the church during this century," it is difficult to say where he is to look for it. After the utmost search through other parts, he may ask, *Where is wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?*

There is little doubt but that all through these dark ages there were many thousands who stood aloof from the corruptions of the times, and bore practical testimony against them; and who, notwithstanding some errors, were much nearer the truth and true religion than those who have reproached them as heretics.

There is reason to believe that amongst the *Novatians*, the *Paulicians*, the *Cathari*, the *Paterines*, and others who separated from the Catholic Church, and were cruelly persecuted by it, there were a great number of faithful witnesses for the truth in those days.

We should not, like Bishop NEWTON, confine the witnesses to councils, princes, and eminent men, who in their day bore testimony against error and superstition. They will be found, I doubt not, in great numbers amongst those who were unknown, and consequently unnoticed, by historians. God hath chosen the *things that are not* to bring to nought the things that are. Let a church history of our own times be written on the principles of that of MOSHEIM, and the great body of the most faithful witnesses would have no place in it.

The history of the witnesses will be principally found in that of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, who for a succession of centuries spread themselves over almost every nation in Europe, and in innumerable instances bore testimony, at the expense of their lives, against the corruptions of the antichristian party.

John Paul Perrin, a French Protestant, of the city of Lyons, who early in the seventeenth century wrote the history of these churches, traces their origin to *Peter Waldo*, who was also a citizen of Lyons. Waldo, as we shall see presently, was not the father of the Waldenses ; but he was an excellent man. About the year 1160 he began to bear testimony against the papal corruptions. The Archbishop of Lyons being informed of his proceedings, sought to apprehend him ; but Waldo having many friends in the city, was concealed there for about three years. After this, he was driven from Lyons, and it is said that he retired into Dauphine in the South of France, and afterwards into Picardy in the North ; and that his followers spread themselves, not only in Piedmont, Provence, Languedoc, &c. but in almost all the nations of Europe.

Waldo translated, or procured to be translated, the Scriptures into the French language ; by means of which his followers disseminated the truth over a great part of Europe.

In *Piedmont*, whither some of his followers were driven, churches were planted, which, though exposed to innumerable oppressions and persecutions from their princes, who were stirred up by the priests, yet continued to bear witness to the truth, not only till the Reformation, but for a considerable time after it. In *Picardy*, whither Waldo himself retired, the houses of three hundred gentlemen who adhered to him were razed to the ground and several walled towns were destroyed. Being driven from thence, he and his followers retired into *Flanders*, where great numbers of them were burnt to death. From thence many fled into *Germany*, particularly into *Alsace*, and the country along the Rhine, where the Bishop of *Mayence* caused to be burnt thirty-five burgesses in one fire, and eighteen in another, who with great constancy suffered death. At *Strasburg* eighty were burnt at the instance of the Bishop of the place. They were scattered through the whole kingdom of *France*. From the year 1206, when the inquisition was established, to 1228, such multitudes were seized, particularly in France, that even the Bishops declared to the monks inquisitors, that "the expense of supporting them would be more than could be defrayed, and that there would not be found lime and stone sufficient to build prisons which should contain them!" A hundred and fourteen were burnt alive at one time in Paris. In 1223 they had goodly churches in *Bulgaria*, *Croatia*, *Dalmatia*, and *Hungary*; and notwithstanding the persecutions in Germany, one of their martyrs assured his persecutors in the year 1315, that there were then 80,000 of the same mind in the country. In *Bohemia*, a colony of Waldenses settled and planted churches 240 years before the time of Huss. Another colony went from Dauphine about 1370, and settled in *Calabria*, where they were defended by their landlords against the priests till 1560, when they were exterminated by the papal soldiery. In *England*, during the reign of Henry II. namely, from 1174 to 1189, they were persecuted under the name of *Publicans*. About 1315, Lollard, who was seven years afterwards burnt to death at Cologne, came over to England, and taught many, who from thence were called *Lollards*, and were persecuted without mercy. Soon

after the death of Lollard, the same doctrines were taught by *Wickliff*, whose followers also for a century and a half, down to the Reformation, were burnt in great numbers.

Perrin, as has been observed, traces the origin of the Waldenses and Albigenses to PETER WALDO: yet there are several things even in his history which prove their existence LONG BEFORE THE TIME OF WALDO. He quotes *Reynerius* the inquisitor, who wrote within sixty years after Waldo, as saying of the Waldenses that "they had resisted the church of Rome *for a long time*." He quotes a Waldensian poem, called *The Noble Lesson*, which poem appears by its contents to have been written about the year 1100, that is, forty or fifty years at least before the appearance of Waldo. He quotes *Claudius Rubis*, who, in his *History of Lyons*, says of the Waldenses in a way of reproach, that "being retired unto the Alps, at their departure from Lyons, they became *like the rest of the people of that country*, besom-riders," or sorcerers. There must then have been a people among the Alps who were reproached as sorcerers, before the disciples of Waldo went and joined them. Finally, In *Perrin's* History of the Albigenses, he says, They received the belief of the Waldenses soon after the departure of Waldo from Lyons, that is, soon after 1160, and yet that the instruments who were employed in this work were *Peter of Bruis*, *Henry*, *Joseph*, *Esperon*, and *Arnold Holt*. But *Peter of Bruis* began to preach against the corruptions of popery in 1110, and was burnt in 1130, and *Henry* was soon after imprisoned at Rome; all before the times of Waldo. There must therefore have been a body of these faithful witnesses from an early period, probably from the times in which the Christian church began to be overspread with corruptions.

In the spring of 1655, a most horrible massacre of the Waldenses was perpetrated in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy. On this occasion Sir Samuel Morland going over as Envoy from the Protector Cromwell to the Court of Savoy, was charged, as he says, by Archbishop Usher, before he left England, to make the

most diligent inquiry into the antiquity of the Waldenses.* Having finished his business at Turin, and retired to Geneva, he was requested by Secretary Thurloe to write his *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont.* In this history, Sir Samuel, besides relating many things of the Waldenses since the days of *Perrin*, and narrating the particulars of the late massacre, makes it appear that these churches remained united with all other Christian churches so long as they retained the true religion; but when the church of Rome departed from it, they began to depart from her; and that the followers of *Peter Waldo*, who about 1165 fled from the South of France into the valleys of Piedmont, were not the first Waldenses, but rather that they joined themselves to those their faithful brethren who had been there long before them.

*It was on occasion of this horrible massacre that MILTON wrote the following sonnet:—

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
Mother and infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
A triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who having learn'd thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!

Not only did the English Government interfere with the Court of Turin in behalf of the remnant of these persecuted people, but a collection was made for them through the nation, which amounted to nearly £40,000, (a prodigious sum in those times,) and which was sent to them by Sir Samuel Morland.

The learned Dr. Allix, a French Protestant who took refuge in England on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, largely establishes the same thing in his *Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and of the Country of the Albigenses.* He has proved that these people from their situation in the *valleys*, and not from Waldo, were denominated *Wallenses*, or the *Vaudois*—that though not free from a portion of the general corruption, yet they continued to maintain the leading principles of what is now called the Protestant religion—that before the year 1026 a body of men in Italy connected with *Gundulfus* believed contrary to the opinions of the church of Rome, condemned its errors, and sent their brethren into divers places to oppose themselves to the superstitions that reigned throughout the west—that in the same century another body of the Christians of Italy, denominated *Paterines*, and whose principles were much the same with those who were afterwards called Waldenses, separated from the church of Rome—that soon after the year 1100, it was said, "If a man loves those that desire to love God, and Jesus Christ, if he will neither curse, nor swear, nor lie, nor whore, nor kill, nor deceive his neighbour, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently say, He is a *Vaudès*, he deserves to be punished; and by lies and forging are found to take away from him what he has got by his lawful industry"—that about 1160 many of the followers of Peter Waldo retired into the valleys of Piedmont, and there joined the Vaudois—that Waldo himself being condemned as a heretic, it was common for the papists to call all religious people Waldenses, hoping thereby to fix a stigma upon them, and to represent them as a sect but newly risen up—and that from this time to the Reformation, a period of between three and four hundred years, the Waldenses were persecuted with but little intermission; partly by armies sent to destroy them, and partly by the horrid process of the inquisition; which persecutions they bore with unparalleled constancy.

Similar remarks are made by Dr. Allix on the churches of the *Albigenses*, so called from *Albi*, a city in the South of France. He has proved that these churches continued for many centuries independent of the Pope—that about the middle of the eleventh

century *Berengarius* of Tours opposed the doctrines of the Romish church, and was charged by its adherents with having corrupted almost all the French, Italians, and English—that early in the twelvth, namely about the year 1110, *Peter of Bruis*, and after him *Henry*, taught the same doctrines, for which the first was burnt, and the other died in prison—that in the fourth canon of the Council of Tours, held in the year 1163, it is said, "In the country about Thoulouse there sprang up *long ago* a damnable heresy, which by little and little, like a canker, spreading itself to the neighbouring places in Gascoin, hath already infected many other provinces"—that between 1137 and 1180, Languedoc was so full of the disciples of *Peter of Bruis*, and *Henry*, that the Archbishop Narbonne, writing to Louis VII. king of France, complains as follows—"My Lord the king, We are extremely pressed with many calamities, among which there is one that most of all affects us, which is, that the catholic faith is extremely shaken in this our diocess, and St. Peter's boat is so violently tossed by the waves that it is in great danger of sinking!"

From the whole it appears that in the early ages of the papal apostasy, before the introduction of image-worship, transubstantiation, and other gross departures from the faith, the opposition of the faithful would be less decided than in latter times. Other Christian churches, while they preserved their independency, might not go the same lengths as that of Rome; but neither might they at once separate from it, nor probably be clear of a participation in its corruptions. The opposition to it might be expected also to be chiefly from individuals rather than from churches, and which appears to have been the fact.

The famous Claude, Bishop of Turin, in the ninth century, though he preached the doctrine of Christ in great purity, and boldly opposed almost all the errors of popery: yet does not appear to have so separated from the church of Rome as to form independent churches. The principles however which he taught led to this issue, and were acted upon after his death. His preaching and writings contributed greatly to the spread of true religion in the Valleys of Piedmont.

From the fourth to the tenth century but little is said of the Waldenses in history: yet as *Reynerius*, who wrote about the year 1230, speaks of the Vaudois as "a sect of the *longest standing*;" and as the Council of Tours about 70 years before this, speaks of the same heresy as having "sprung up *long ago*;" we may conclude even from the acknowledgments of the adversaries that God was not without his witnesses in those dark ages, Milton also in the sonnet before quoted, represents the Vaudois, or people of the Valleys, as having "kept God's truth so pure of old, when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones." He must therefore have considered them as having preserved the purity of Christianity *while our Saxon ancestors were yet heathens.* After the tenth century, when iniquity was at the full, the opposition was more decided. For 500 years, during the most murderous wars and persecutions, the *Petrobrussians*, the *Paterines*, the *Waldenses*, the *Albigenses*, the *Lollards*, the *Wickliffites*, *&c.*, maintained their ground. Nor were they contented to bear witness to the truth in their own countries, but employed missionaries to almost all the nations of Europe; and this notwithstanding each missionary could expect nothing less then martyrdom for his reward!

Nor were their labours unproductive. The numbers who espoused their principles in the South of France only were such that a crusade of 500,000 men was sent against them. It was by this army of bloody-minded fanatics that the city of *Beziers* was taken, and the inhabitants without distinction, men, women, and children, to the number of 60,000, were put to the sword!

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONTINUED : OF THE SLAUGHTER AND RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES, WITH THE FALLING OF A TENTH PART OF THE CITY.

Chap. xi. 7—14.

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8 *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.* 9 *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.* 10 *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another : because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* 11 *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them ; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.* 12 *And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

If the testimony of the witnesses be the same as their prophesying in sackcloth, it must continue through the whole of the 1260 years. But it does not appear that the beast at the termination of that period, will be able to " overcome and kill them," seeing he himself will then be slain, and his body given to the burning flame. Several commentators therefore have rendered it, *while they shall*

perform, or *be about to finish* their testimony, &c. And with this agrees the account which represents the beast and his party at the time of the slaying of the witnesses as being in the plenitude of their power.

The *slaughter* of the witnesses would not, according to the usual style of the prophecy, denote their being put to death as individuals, but silenced and crushed as witnessing bodies. It was thus, as we have seen, that the Eastern empire and the Greek church as connected with it, were *killed* by the Turkish horsemen. Chap. ix. 18.

Of the *beast* that shall kill them no mention is made before; but we shall hear much of him hereafter. Suffice it at present to say, it is the same as Daniel's fourth beast, (Chap. vii,) and as that which is described by John, in Chap. xiii. 1—8. of this book, as having "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns:" it is *the Roman empire under its last form, as divided into ten independent kingdoms*. There he is described as rising out of the sea; here, out of the abyss, or bottomless pit: the one, as Mr. FABER remarks, may denote his political, and the other his spiritual origin.

The witnesses were to be killed *in the great city*, which "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." We shall have occasion more than once to notice an antichristian *city* as opposed to the church of Christ, just as the great harlot is opposed to the bride the Lamb's wife. It will be proper therefore to fix the meaning at the outset. If the prophecy had related to Old Testament times, when God chose a literal city in which to build his temple, a literal city might have been properly opposed to it. When Zion was his dwelling-place, Babylon was its adversary. But as the true church and the gospel is not confined to place, neither is the false church. The New Testament Zion does not consist of material buildings, but is a community scattered among the nations; and such is the New Testament Babylon. The "great city" therefore means Rome, not in respect of its buildings, nor the inhabitants within its walls, nor as a political empire, the symbol of which is *the beast*; but as the head of the antichristian community. This city, or

community of nations under one ecclesiastical head, was a Sodom for its filthiness, an Egypt for its idolatry and persecution, and a Jerusalem for its malignant hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The dead bodies of the witnesses were to lie in the street of the great city *unburied:* that is, being silenced and crushed throughout Christendom, they would for a time be treated with the utmost indignity and reproach, as those are who are denied the ordinary decencies of burial. Nor would these indignities be inflicted by the highest orders only; but "peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations," that is, the body of the inhabitants of Christendom, would take a part in them. While insulting the witnesses, they would make merry on their own account, as being no longer tormented with their testimony.

Such is the description given of the witnesses, and of the treatment which they would receive, both from the ruling powers and the common people. The question is, What are the facts which correspond with it? It is thought by some that both the slaughter and the resurrection of the witnesses are yet to be fulfilled. If so, it is vain to look for corresponding facts in *past* events. This was the opinion of Bishop NEWTON, of Dr. GILL, and of other expositors of note. I cannot but consider this as a mistake. In the Bishop it appears to have been founded on the supposition of *the time of the dead that they should be judged*, spoken of in ver. 18. referring to the last judgment, or "the consummation of all things;" but which manifestly refers to the avenging of the martyrs by the judgments to be inflicted on the papal power, under the seven vials, antecedent to the Millennium. (Compare Chap. xi. 18, 19. with Chap. xvi. 12—21.) Dr. GILL speaks of the war by which the witnesses are slain as being "the last war of the beast:" * but the last war of the beast is that in which he and the false prophet will be taken; and in which the followers of Christ, instead of being killed, shall be victorious over their enemies. Chap. xix. 20. † It is remarkable too, that both the slaughter and resurrection of the witnesses, together with the falling of a tenth

* On Chap. xi 8.

† See President Edwards on Agreement in Extraordinary Prayer, Part III. p. 100.

part of the city, are introduced before the termination of the sixth, or second woe-trumpet. I question therefore whether these prophecies can refer to events of so late a date as this hypothesis requires.

The time in which the witnesses are slain, and their bodies lie unburied, appears to be a time in which the beast is in the height of his power, or as PRESIDENT EDWARDS says, "In which the true church of Christ is lowest of all, most of all prevailed against by antichrist, and nearest to an utter extinction; a time in which there is left the least visibility of the church of Christ yet subsisting in the world, and the least remains of any thing appertaining to true religion, whence a revival of it could be expected." * It is true, we know not what is before us; but if such a state of things as this should return after what has occurred in Europe within the last 300 years, it will, as Mr. EDWARDS I think has proved, be contrary to all God's usual methods of proceeding. I cannot therefore but think with him that the persecution and slaughter of the witnesses *preceded the Reformation.*

After the suppression of the Bohemians, for nearly a hundred years, true religion was in a manner crushed. The enemy continued without resistance to "wear out the saints of the Most High." Not a *society* or *body* of Christians was to be found which dared to oppose the general corruption. The popish party considered the heretics as suppressed, and congratulated each other on so happy an event. The security that they felt was manifest by the barefaced manner in which they sold their pardons and indulgences at the time when Luther's indignation was first kindled against them.

Whether the "three days and a half" during which the witnesses should lie unburied, denote three years and a half, and refer to a particular period of that duration, or only to a short space of oppression, in allusion to the "three times and a half," as being a kind of 1260 years in miniature, I am not able to determine; nor have I seen any thing on the subject relating to a particular period which afforded me satisfaction. However this may

* On Agreement in Prayer, &c. p. 92.

be, if the slaying of the witnesses refer to the times immediately preceding the Reformation, their resurrection and ascension to heaven must denote the Reformation itself, and the placing, by Divine Providence, of the parties concerned in it out of the reach of their enemies. The resurrection, as it were, of the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, and other reputed heretics, in the persons of Luther and his cotemporaries, with the rapid progress made by them in various nations nearly at the same time, would cause great fear to fall upon their adversaries; and the security in which they were placed by the succession of those nations from the See of Rome was equal to their being taken up to heaven in a cloud, where those who thirsted for their blood could only look after them with malignity and envy.

13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

After the resurrection of the witnesses, and before the sounding of the seventh, or third woe-trumpet, follows an *earthquake*, and a tenth part of the city falls. In the earthquake are slain of men, (or names of men,) 7000, and the remnant are affrighted, and give glory to the God of heaven. If the meaning of this passage can be clearly ascertained, it will determine the time of the sounding of the seventh angel, and serve as a medium by which to judge of several other things.

The "earthquake" must, I conceive, denote a *revolution*, as this is the appropriate and well-known symbol of such an event. The "city" is doubtless the same as that which in the 8th verse is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt;" that is, the Romish Church, or the Apocalyptic Babylon. By "a tenth part" of it, must be understood a considerable portion of it, and very probably a part belonging to one of the ten horns, or kingdoms into which the empire under its papal form was to be divided. By "the names of men," Dr. GOODWIN and others have understood *titles* or *orders* of men, and supposed that the revolution signified by the earthquake would destroy them. Or if the phrase denote, as some have understood it, *men of name*, it would signify the de-

struction made among the higher orders, and which would of course be accompanied with great slaughter among the common people. "The remnant that were affrighted and gave glory to God," would denote those of the same community who escaped, and whose fears would forebode other examples of the divine justice.

What event is there during the 1260 years of antichristian usurpation which answers to these characters? It has been understood of the fall of the Greek Church in 1453, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks: but that event has been described in the vision of the horsemen, Chap. ix; and it is the Western or Latin church that occupies the whole of these chapters. It were much better to understand it of the falling off of the Northern nations from the See of Rome, which was an immediate consequence of the Reformation. Its being "in the same hour" with the resurrection of the witnesses would favour this interpretation, but in several other particulars it does not agree. No reason can be given why the seceding Northern nations should be called "a *tenth* part of the city;" nor do any events which attended the Reformation appear to correspond with the slaughter of "7000 names of men." If the tenth part of the city fell as early as the Reformation, the seventh angel must have sounded his trumpet "quickly" after it; and this some writers, who believed the former, have very consistently maintained, conceiving also that the Millennium commenced, or would commence, towards the middle of the eighteenth century. But surely we must allow that events have contradicted this explication. The character of the seventh trumpet is, that under it, the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: but the nations which have fallen off from the papal See have not answered to this description, but have rather sunk into formality and irreligion. And as to the Millennium, one of its characters is, that the beast and the false prophet shall first have gone into perdition, and Satan be bound; but neither of these has taken place. It is also in the Millennium, if ever, that we are to look for the cessation of war, and the universal prevalence of true religion, both among Jews and Gentiles, neither of which has yet come to pass.

All things considered, I know of no event that seems to correspond so well with the prophecy as *the late Revolution in France.* Thus it has been understood by some of the ablest expositors, and that for ages prior to the event. A writer in the *Eclectic Review* has collected no less than ten of them who have referred to this event, and that long before it occurred, and several of them in commenting on the passage. Among these are the names of Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN, and VITRINGA. Dr. GOODWIN, who wrote in 1639, says, "By the tenth part of the city, I understand, as Mr. Brightam before me, some one tenth part of Europe." "I think it probable that France may be this country; and that in this *revolution* men will be deprived of their *names and titles*, which are to be rooted out for ever, and condemned to perpetual forgetfulness." "France may have the honour to have the last great stroke in the ruining of Rome. And this figurative earthquake, though happening only in one country, may extend its effects to others, so that a great shaking of states, as well political as ecclesiastical, may be intended."

VITRINGA, who wrote in 1719, asks, "What can be more suitable than to understand here the *tenth part of the city* some illustrious kingdom, which, being under the dominion of Rome with respect to religion, was of distinguished rank among the ten kingdoms, and had hitherto defended the Romish superstitions? It is here said in a figurative sense, that it would *fall*, since by means of those mighty commotions by which it was to be shaken, it would be torn from the body of the antichristian empire." "*France* may be the forum of the great city." "The *earthquake* in this tenth part of the city is an event which history must illustrate. It is not perfectly clear from the prophecy of what kind these commotions are; whether warlike, such as are wont to shake the world, and subvert the existing government, or whether they are such as arise on a sudden from the insurrection of a nation that has been long oppressed: the words of the prophecy appear to favour the latter sense. In the predicted catastrophe some thousands will undoubtedly perish *distinguished by* their elevated dignities or nobility of birth."

Eclectic Review, for February, 1814.

Dr. GILL in 1748, speaking of the *earthquake*, says, "Something yet to come is here intended;" and "I rather think the kingdom of *France* is meant, the last of the *ten* kingdoms which rose up out of the ruins of the Roman empire." And in his note on Chap. xiii. 18. he speaks of the destruction of antichrist as "quickly following the downfall of the kingdom of *France*, as the *tenth* part of the city, which should fall a little before the third woe came on."

The revolution in France has been truly a moral earthquake, which has shaken the papal world to its centre. One of the *ten* kingdoms which composed it, and that the principal one, has so fallen as at present to be rather a scourge than a support to it. If by *names of men* be meant *titles*, they were abolished: or if *men of name*, the slaughter predicted of them certainly corresponds with the calamitieswhich befell the princes, the nobles, and the priests, during that awful period; and as the fall of a few thousands of great men would involve that of an immense number of the common people, such has been the effect in this instance. Whether the remaining adherents to the papal cause have given "glory to God" in the manner they ought, or not, they have felt his hand, and by their fear and dismay have been compelled to yield a sort of involuntary acknowledgment of his justice.

The only objection that I feel to this application of the prophecy is, that it is said to be "in the same hour" as that in which the witnesses ascended into heaven, which, if understood of that legal security that from the Reformation was afforded to the Protestants against popish persecution, may seem to be at too great a distance for such a mode of expression. It is however not only under the same trumpet, but *during the period in which the witnesses continue to enjoy that security to which they were then introduced*, that this event has occurred. Instead of the great Babylonish city recovering itself so as to renew its persecutions against the witnesses, it is itself smitten of God as by an earthquake and in a measure overthrown. If the opinions of GOODWIN, VITRINGA, and GILL be correct, and if the events which

have of late years occurred be the accomplishment of them, the last of these writers must have been mistaken in supposing the slaying of the witnesses to be something future: for the fall of the city is placed *after* the slaying and rising again of the witnesses. If therefore the one be now past, so is the other.

DISCOURSE XV.

THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONCLUDED : OR THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL.

Chap. xi. 14—19.

The second woe is past ; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 *And the seventh angel sounded : and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.* 16 *And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,* 17 *Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.* 18 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets ; and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.* 19 *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

After the great earthquake, we hear, as it were, the cry of the watchmen, telling us the hour of the night—"The second woe is

past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly !" When the first woe was past, the second and third woes were to come *hereafter;* but between the last two there would be but a short space. As things should approach to a crisis, events would occur in more rapid succession.

The *second* woe, as it introduced the Turkish horsemen, (Chap. ix. 13—19.) must have commenced about 1281, and, (if the falling of a tenth part of the city has been rightly interpreted,) ended about 1791. Its having commenced with the introduction of the Turks does not prove that it comprehended them only, nor that it must needs end with the passing away of their empire. On the contrary, the accomplishment of their overthrow seems to be reserved for the sixth vial of the third woe-trumpet, which will be poured upon the Euphrates, near the times of the Millennium.

But it may be asked, How is it that the sounding of the trumpets should be introduced in this place ? If this and the three following chapters contain *general descriptions* of the papal apostasy, *including the times of various trumpets, but not divided by them,* how is it that in the midst of one of these descriptions mention should be made of the second woe ending, and of the third woe coming quickly ? I answer, Though these general descriptions are not divided by trumpets, yet as they comprehend the times of the trumpets, each of them might have been so, and for our information one of them actually is so. And as the termination of the sixth, and the sounding of the seventh trumpets forms an era in the church of Christ, it is here marked with peculiar emphasis. It is from this era, as we shall find, that after these three general descriptions are given, the series of the prophecy is resumed, and the vials are introduced.

But if the sounding of the seventh angel form an era in the Christian church, it requires that we pause, and pay particular attention to it.

The events of this trumpet were anticipated by the angel, at the distance probably of more than a thousand years, when he forbad the seven thunders to be written—" The days of the voice of the

seventh angel, when he should begin to sound," are marked as the period when the great designs of heaven, foretold in prophecy, should be accomplished. Chap. x.

The contents of this trumpet are of deeper interest than any that have preceded it, both to the enemies of the church and to the church itself. It wears a two-fold aspect. Towards the enemies of the church it is a *woe*-trumpet, and a signal of mighty vengeance : towards the church itself it is a harbinger of joy, a kind of *jubilee*-trumpet, announcing the year of enlargement ; for when the " seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ : and he shall reign for ever and ever!" Under the *first* of these aspects it includes the last seven plagues, which are but so many subdivisions of it, and which are, I conceive, the execution of the seven thunders in Chap. x. These thunders, it is observable, are not only referred to " the days of the voice of the seventh angel," but to those in which he should *begin* to sound," that is, to the early part of them. Under the *last* aspect, it comprehends all the success of the gospel previous to, and during the Millennium, with all the glorious results of it as described in the remainder of the prophecy. We are not to consider it, however, under either of these aspects as being *more than a signal of things which are to follow.* As the vengeance will not all be poured forth at once, so neither will the kingdoms of this world at once become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ : but from the sounding of this trumpet both shall have a commencement, and both be singularly progressive under it.

With respect to the *time*, if the application of the " earthquake and the falling of a tenth part of the city" to events which have occured within the last twenty years, be just, there can be little if any doubt of the seventh angel's having sounded his trumpet within that period, and of the whole of these verses containing a general view of the state of things from our times to the commencement of the Millennium.

On this occasion the heavenly chorus strikes up. The four and twenty elders who sit before God on their seats, fall upon their

faces and worship God. This heavenly chorus is not introduced on ordinary occasions. Things must therefore be pending of deep interest to the church of God. By the matter of the song we may learn something of what they are. Corresponding with the two-fold aspect of the seventh trumpet, those who have destroyed the earth are to be destroyed, and those who have suffered for Christ are to be rewarded.

The character under which the Most High is praised, "The Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come," seems to imply that he could have suppressed the power of his enemies at any time; that though for wise reasons he had not for ages past exerted his strength, yet now he was about to "take unto him his great power, and to reign;" and that all this is the result of his immutable counsels.

The "anger" of the nations had been great both against God and his servants, opposing him, and persecuting them with unrelenting cruelty: but now *his* wrath is come; now the blood of the martyrs of past ages shall be avenged;* now their labours and sufferings shall produce their effects; from the seed which had been sown during a succession of centuries in tears and blood, a harvest of joy will spring up; finally, those who by persecutions, corruptions, and unjust wars, have destroyed the earth, shall now be themselves destroyed.

Under the image of opening the heavenly temple, seems to be set forth the glorious state of the church when these judgments shall be executed upon her enemies. As the temple was polluted and shut up under certain idolatrous reigns, and opened in times of reformation, so the gospel temple has been treated under the reign of antichrist, and so it shall be restored at or towards the end of the 1260 years. "The ark of the testament being seen," implies the removal of the vail; and as it was not to be seen in the second temple, but only in the first, its being seen here would seem to denote the *restoration* of pure primitive Christianity, as

* Chap. xviii. 20.

it was taught, believed, and practised, when the gospel temple was first erected. "The lightning, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail," are the same things which are described under the seventh vial. Chap. xvi. 18—21. Both refer to the same events; only this is general, and that more particular: and as there the language seems to refer to the efficacy of the gospel, and of the spiritual judgments on those who reject it, purifying the moral atmosphere of the world, such appears to be its meaning here.

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE SECOND GENERAL DESCRIPTION: OR, THE GREAT RED DRAGON, AND THE WOMAN FLYING INTO THE WILDERNESS.

Chap. xii. 1—6.

The first general description, it has been observed, took up the apostasy at the time when things were so matured that the Catholic church was ordered to be left out of God's temple, as not belonging to it: but this appears to trace it to its origin. Here we go back to an early period of history; possibly as far as to the fourth century, and to the times of some of the first trumpets. At a time when the church was in danger of being lost in superstition and worldly conformity, it was natural for the faithful to feel anxious for the cause of Christ. For their encouragement, the church is described in vision as bearing a *seed* which should be preserved by the special care of heaven, through all these evil times, and become in the end victorious over the whole earth. Such appears to be the scope of this second general description.

1 *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:* 2 *And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* 3 *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.* 4 *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* 5 *And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.* 6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

Prior to the introduction of antichristian corruptions, the church is described as "a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;" denoting the plenitude of gospel light which compassed her as a garment; her superiority to the Jewish dispensation; and, in consequence of her adherence to the doctrine and examples of the apostles, her triumph over ten successive persecutions.

The woman is said to be "with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered;" denoting, it may be, the earnest desires of the true church after the increase of believers. Such has always been its character. Worldly men, who have taken upon them the Christian name, have invariably been employed in compassing selfish objects. But true Christians have at all times been distinguished by a desire to extend the kingdom of Christ.

The following description, by Eusebius, of the labours of the immediate successors of the apostles, is doubtless applicable to the church so long as it adhered to their doctrine and example. "They built up those churches the foundations of which were laid by the apostles, promoting greatly the doctrine of the gospel, and scattering the salutary seed of the kingdom of heaven at large over the whole world.—Travelling abroad, they performed the work of evangelists to those who as yet had not heard the word

of faith, being very ambitious to preach Christ, and to deliver the books of the divine gospels. And these persons having only laid the foundation of faith in remote and barbarous places, and constituted other pastors, committed to them the culture of those they had perfectly introduced to the faith, departing again to other regions and nations, accompanied with the grace and co-operation of God." Lib. III. c. 37.

While the woman is thus in labour, "behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, whose tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth, stands before her, ready to devour her child as soon as it was born." The dragon is in ver. 9. expressly called "the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world," and all that is said of him in the remainder of the prophecy agrees with this in its literal application: but by his having the heads and horns of the Roman beast, is intimated that it was under this form, or by means of this government, that he did what he did in the present instance.

As the woman is not an individual, but the society of the faithful, so neither is the man-child an individual, but the woman's *seed*, which in ver. 17th is explained of them who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It was this seed that the dragon aimed by persecution and corruption to destroy. This child was *born to rule;* not however at present: for if so, there had been no need of his being caught up to the throne of God, nor for his mother's flying into the wilderness for 1260 years. It is at the termination of that period that the man-child, or the seed of the church shall rule; and this accords with Dan. vii. 27. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Nor need it be objected that the sceptre of this government is a rod of iron: for such the kingdom of Christ must ever be to the ungodly.

There are two marks by which the times referred to in this vision may, if I mistake not, be ascertained. One is the 1260 days, or years, which, being the appropriate number of the reign

of the papal antichrist, proves it to have no reference to the times of paganism. The other is, that the ten horns are not upon the beast, but upon the dragon, and the crowns are not as yet upon them, but upon the seven heads. When the horns are spoken of in reference to the times following the overthrow of the empire by the northern nations, and of its becoming ten independent kingdoms, they are described as being upon the beast, and as having crowns upon them. Chap. xiii. 1. This indicates that the introduction of the vision contained in the first five verses of this chapter, though it does not go so far back as to the days of Paganism, yet neither does it go so far forward as to the times of Popery; but to *those which were intermediate and preparatory*, namely, the fourth and fifth centuries, in which Christianity became exceedingly corrupt, and a connexion was introduced between the secular and ecclesiastical powers, which issued in what is exhibited in Chap. xvii. a woman riding upon a scarlet-coloured beast! I do not suppose that the 1260 years of the reign of antichrist are to be reckoned from the time when these corruptions began. Antichrist did not commence his reign from his birth; but from thence his way was preparing. It is of what was done *prior* to the woman's flight into the wilderness for 1260 years that these verses speak. By the accession of Constantine, the beast was "as it were wounded to death;" and this may be the reason why no mention is made of him. Under the Christian emperors the beast for some time would lie apparently dead: the dragon, however, "that old serpent the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world," knew how even *at that time* to make use of the pomp and power of the empire to serve his purposes.

It is in the corruptions of the fourth and fifth centuries that we are to look for the origin of popery. It was by the influx of worldly power and glory into the church that Satan first seduced a great part of those who had shone like stars in the Christian firmament, and, (alluding perhaps to his having originally drawn into apostasy a great part of the angels of heaven,) cast them to the earth. But perceiving, notwithstanding what has been done as to a number of the *leaders* of the church, that a large body of

the faithful were still intent on not only preserving but extending the Redeemer's kingdom, the dragon aims to destroy the fruits of their labours. When he saw that the bait of worldly pomp and power had so far succeeded as to draw the principal men into his net, it was doubtless his object to make a full end of the church of Christ. But he was disappointed. The woman "brought forth a man-child, who in the end would rule all nations as with a rod of iron."

By the woman's flying into the wilderness, seems to be meant her retiring into obscurity, where she would exist without legal protection, in some such manner as David did when he fled from the persecutions of Saul, and without any other defence than that which was afforded by the shielding providence of God. In this way the true church existed in all the nations of Europe from the time that popery first obtained the ascendency, and during the long period of its domination. Wherever this religion prevailed, all those Christians who refused to yield to its corruptions were driven into obscurity. It was thus not only in those countries bordering upon Italy, but in others at the greatest distance. It is thought by some to have been thus with the *British Churches* in Wales, with the *Culdees* in Scotland and Ireland, and probably with every other body of Christians where this influence extended. Many of them were so pursued by persecution, that if they had any communion with each other, it was in a secret way. If they met to worship God, it must be in the night, in woods, or mountains, or caves of the earth. So little visibility belonged to the church in this state, that it requires some attention to ascertain where it was to be found. To the question, however, "Where was your church before Luther?" we may answer, IN THE WILDERNESS, where prophecy has placed her, and whither those who ask the question had driven her. If one place was more distinguished than another as affording a shelter to the faithful, *it was among the mountains and valleys of the Alps.*

It may be difficult to decide upon the time when the woman fled into the wilderness. This however we know, that very soon after

the revolution by the accession of Constantine, corruptions in doctrine, divisions, intrigues, persecutions, and a flood of superstition, overspread the Catholic Church. *

In such a state of things true Christians must not only be offended, but must become offensive to others, and so be persecuted, and compelled to retire as into the wilderness.

The ancient *Vaudois*, are said to "date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century; when one Leo at the great revolution in religion under Constantine the Great, opposed the innovations of Sylvester, Bishop of Rome." This agrees with what was said by *Rainerius*, a monk inquisitor of the thirteenth century, that they were the most pernicious of all sects, for three reasons. 1. "Because it is the *most ancient*. Some aver their existence (says he) from the days of Sylvester, others from the very times of the apostles. 2. Because it is so *universal:* for

* We may see into what a gulf of superstitious imposture the Catholic Church was sunk within fifty years after the death of Constantine, by the following story, taken from Dr. Allix. *Sulpicius Severus*, who lived early in the fifth century, wrote *The Life of a St. Martin of Tours*, who had lived in the latter part of the fourth. In writing this life, Sulpicius speaks of a certain altar, which the popular superstition had rendered famous, because some martyr was pretended to have been buried in the place. "St. Martin not being able to make any certain discovery of the name of the martyr, and the circumstances of his sufferings, and being loth absolutely to doubt the truth of it, thought fit himself to go to this famous sepulchre in company of some of his brethren. Being come to the place he earnestly begged of God to reveal to him the name and merit of the martyr. After this, turning himself towards the left, he saw standing a hideous ghost. They command him to declare himself. The ghost obeys, tells his name, confesses that he had been executed for robbery, that it was only the error of the people that caused him to be canonized, that he was in nothing like the martyrs, they were in glory, whereas he was in pain. The good St. Martin being troubled to hear this account, caused the altar to be carried to another place, and so (says his biographer) delivered the people from a superstitious error."

The same *Sulpicius Severus*, though a monk himself, yet speaking of the monks of his time, says, "They do almost all things in such a manner, that you would not so much think they had repented for their former crimes, as that afterwards they had repented of their repentance!"

there is hardly a country into which this sect has not crept. 3. Because all others render themselves detestable by their blasphemies; but this has a great *appearance of godliness*, living a righteous life before men, believing right concerning God, confessing all the articles of the creed, only hating and reviling the Church of Rome."

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE SECOND GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED; OR, THE WAR BETWEEN MICHAEL AND THE DRAGON.

Chap. xii. 7—17.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 *and prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven.* 9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* 10 *And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.* 11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death.* 12 *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

The dragon, having driven the true church into the wilderness, is supposed to have carried things in his own way among the rest. At a certain period however during her 1260 years residence in the wilderness, Michael her Prince espouses her cause, and makes war upon the dragon.

There is no doubt a reference in this part of the prophecy to what was predicted in Dan. x. 13—21. xii. 1. Michael is there described not only as standing up for the people of God under Persian oppression, but as fighting the battles of the church in later ages, even during the "time, times, and half a time," or during the dominion of antichrist.

The account given of Michael agrees not with the character of a created angel, but with that of Messiah the Prince, who defends his church against the dragon, "that old serpent the Devil." Each has his angels, who perhaps are the visible agents in the war. But before we determine the application of this part of the vision it will be proper to notice a few of its general characters.

First, The scene is laid in "heaven." Yet in this heaven there is supposed till now to have been a place found for the dragon. It could not therefore be in the church above, where there has been no place for him since he "left his first estate." But in the church below there has. The latter therefore must have been the scene of the present contest.

Secondly, The war is made by Michael on the dragon, and not by the dragon on Michael. This intimates that it must have been at a time when the dragon possessed such a plenitude of power in what was called the Christian church, that his object was not to extend so much as to retain it.

Thirdly, Whatever of worldly power and policy might accompany the war, the war itself was *spiritual*. It was a war between truth and error, righteousness and unrighteousness: for the victors "overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

Fourthly, It is supposed that in this great struggle many of Michael's adherents would lose their lives, but that nevertheless they would overcome. The cause of truth and righteousness would prevail, and those who suffered for Christ's sake would

bear such a testimony for truth, and obtain such a victory over the world, as to be more than conquerors.

Such are the characters of the war: to what event during the 1260 years of antichristian usurpation does it apply? I can conceive of none but *the Reformation in the sixteenth century.* Satan as ruling by means of Rome was then attacked, and cast out of those nations where the Reformation prevailed; which nations being the seat of Christ's visible kingdom are accounted as "heaven," while those which still cleave to the apostasy are "the earth."

A song of the heavenly host is introduced on this occasion: for the "loud voice" (ver. 10.) does not appear to be that of an individual, but of a multitude, who join as with one voice in a shout of joy and praise. It fits the lips of the holy army of martyrs before the throne, who feeling for their brethren upon earth, rejoice in their having obtained a portion of relief. As Satan accused Job, and obtained permission of God to persecute him, so by the agency of the Bishop of Rome, he had from century to century accused and persecuted the saints of the Most High. But now were come "salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren (say they) is cast down, that accused them to our God day and night." The Reformation was at once a pledge of antichrist's consumption, and of the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom.

The weapons by which the victory was obtained are celebrated by the heavenly host, and are worthy of our special attention. Some of the followers of Christ among the Albigenses, the Bohemians, and the Reformers, thought it necessary to take arms, and fight for their religion: but it has proved, I believe, in almost every instance, that where a body of Christians have taken the sword to defend themselves against *persecution*, they as a body have perished by the sword. Whatever of this spirit there might be amongst the Reformers, it was not by this, but by "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony," that they overcame.

The "heavens" from which the dragon is cast out are called upon to rejoice, while a woe is pronounced upon the inhabiters of "the earth and of the sea," or those *continental* and *maritime*

nations where he still dwelleth, and to which his influence is in one sense confined. The power of Satan, in this way being reduced to narrower limits, would be the more mischievous within those limits. He would consider the Reformation as only a first step towards the overthrow of a system, by which under the Christian name he had deceived mankind with equal facility as by the delusions of heathenism. Knowing therefore that his time was short, he would be the more assiduous in improving it. The denunciation wears a terrible aspect towards those nations which, notwithstanding all the light of the Reformation, still cleave to the apostasy. It may be equal to saying, "Woe unto you, Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy; for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time!" From this language it might be expected that in those countries which rejected the Reformation, popery would operate so as either, by producing its proper effect, to lead its votaries into downright infidelity, or by riveting the delusion, to render them more and more the dupes of imposture. And thus it has actually operated: the nations which still cleave to it are nearly divided into two classes, the deceivers and the deceived; the former of which appear to be the destined instruments of heaven in destroying the latter, and so of executing the vials of God's displeasure upon them.

13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.* 14 *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.* 15 *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.* 16 *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.* 17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

The wrath of the dragon for having been cast out of heaven is directed against not only the spiritual welfare of his own subjects,

but the lives of those Christians who were situated within his territories. The friends of Christ in Popish countries have since the Reformation been persecuted with increased violence. In the ordinary measures of legal process, persecution has indeed diminished; it has in a manner been shamed out of countenance by the prevalence of tolerant principles: but the more it has been restrained in this way, the more violent have been its ebullitions in a way of occasional outrage. Of this the massacre of Paris in 1572, the cruelties in the valleys of Piedmont in 1655, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, are horrible examples.

From the times of the Reformation, the church of Christ had in a manner come out of the wilderness. Having obtained a degree of legal protection in several nations, its members were not obliged as heretofore to retire into woods and mountains and caves, nor to have recourse to midnight assemblies for the purpose of hearing the gospel: but after these renewed persecutions the woman is obliged to fly a *second time* into the wilderness, as to her wonted place of refuge. Such has been the state of the Protestants in all popish countries; such has been their state in France from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, to the Revolution in 1789, though of late they were treated with less severity than formerly, being allowed to meet in the day-time, only under military inspection. Nor was it in *popish* countries only that the wrath of the dragon vented itself. A portion of the poison of a persecuting spirit was found among Protestants, even in our own country, from the Reformation to the Revolution of 1688. If one place was more distinguished than another as affording a shelter for the woman at the time of this her *second flight*, I suspect it was *North America*, where the church of Christ has been nourished, and may continue to be nourished during the remainder of the 1260 years. And as to those parts of the church which still exist in a state of insecurity, the serpent has not been suffered to make a full end of them; they are nourished by the word of God, and shall doubtless survive the reign of antichristian corruption and persecution.

The flood of waters cast after the woman by the dragon, and the war made on the remnant of her seed, referring, as it appears,

to the latter end of the 1260 years, may be something *yet to come*. It is not impossible that persecution may yet be revived. The antichristian cause can hardly be supposed to expire without some deadly struggles. Indeed it is in the very act of "making war on him that sitteth upon the horse, and his army," that the "beast and the false prophet will be taken;" and which seems to be the same war which is here made with the "remnant of the woman's seed."

Should a flood of persecution yet be in reserve for the church of Christ, it may be the last effort of an expiring foe; and from that the *earth* will preserve her by swallowing it up; it may be in some such way as the invasion of Philistines preserved David, or as political struggles have often been favourable to Christians, by furnishing those who wished to persecute them with other employment. The dragon, provoked by his want of success against the woman, may vent his malice on the remnant of her seed that are within his reach; but his time is short. His agents "the beast and the false prophet," will soon be taken; and the Angel, with a great chain in his hand, shall next lay hold of *him*, and cast him into the bottomless pit.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION: OR, THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS.

Chap. xiii. 1—10.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns; and upon his horns ten crowns; and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority.* 3 *And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.* 4 *And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* 5 *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.* 6 *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.* 7 *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations,* 8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* 9 *If any man have an ear, let him hear.* 10 *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

The apostle, in vision, standing as upon the sea-shore, sees "a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." A beast rising out of the sea is an empire opposed to God and his Christ, rising out of the perturbed state of things in the world.

The description given of this beast leaves no doubt of its being the same as the fourth beast in the seventh chapter of Daniel, namely, *the Roman Empire;* with only a few circumstantial differences. Daniel viewed it in its *whole duration*, whereas John describes it with special reference to its *last* or *papal form;* Daniel says nothing of its heads, which John does; and lastly, Daniel speaks merely of the ten horns pertaining to the beast, but John describes them as having "crowns," which shows that the times referred to are those in which the western empire would be overthrown, and out of it arise ten independent kingdoms.

This seven-headed and ten-horned beast does not appear to be the Pope, or Popedom, nor the Church of Rome; but *that secular power which has supported the Church of Rome through the whole of her corrupt and bloody progress.* The beast is not the harlot, but that on which the harlot rides. That which has been denominated *The Holy Roman Empire*, of which sometimes a French and sometimes a German monarch has been the head, seems to be the government principally intended, as being the great supporter of that church. It is not this government, however, *exclusive* of that of the other European nations, but merely as a *principal* amongst them. The ten horns were not distinct from the beast, but constituent parts of it. Europe, prior to the Reformation, was a family of nations, united in respect of religion by one ecclesiastical head. As nations they were independent, and ofter engaged in war with one another; but *in supporting the church* they were united. The beast is indeed distinguished from its horns, as any other beast may be, while yet the horns are constituent parts of it. The ten horns are said to "agree and to give their kingdom to the beast (Chap. xvii. 17.): that is, they united with the emperor in supporting the church. Things were so managed indeed by the church that the rulers of every nation in Christen-

dom were in a manner compelled to unite in her support. "All the civil powers were obliged by the Council of Latteran, to take an oath, on pain of ecclesiastical censures, that they would endeavour to exterminate all who were declared heretics by the church out of their dominions; and if any prince or ruler refused to do so, after admonition, it was to be certified to the Pope, who should declare all his subjects absolved from their allegiance, and any Catholic was free to sieze his dominions." Such was this monstrous beast, and such the means used by his rider to guide and govern him.

Of the heads and horns of the beast we shall have occasion to speak hereafter more particularly. At present we may observe, he is described as possessing the properties of the first three of Daniel's four beasts, a leopard, a bear, and a lion, each ferocious and destructive: and whereas the dragon is said to have given him his authority, the government, though professedly Christian, was under the influence of the wicked one. After the empire became Christian, the dragon for a while seemed to take the work of seducing and persecuting men into his own hand (Chap. xii. 1—6.); but he is now contented to transfer it to the beast as a kind of deputy under him. Ver. 2.

"I saw one of his heads (continues the apostle) as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast." To understand this, we must know what is meant by the *heads* of the beast, and this we must learn from Chap. xvii. 7—11. They are there said to be "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and seven kings, five of which are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come." It was not one of the seven mountains that was "as it were wounded to death," but one of the seven kings, or governments, or forms of government, under which Rome existed. These, according to *Tacitus*, the Roman Historian, were *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemvirs*, *Military Tribunes*, and *Emperors;* five of which forms of government had passed away at the time of the prophecy; the sixth, namely that of *Emperors*, then was, and the other was not yet come. The wound which the beast is said to have received in one of his heads was so serious, that he was for a time consid-

ered as dead; yet he was not dead in reality, but merely "*as it were* wounded to death:" for after this he revived and lived and reigned to the wonder of the world. Hence the language in Chap. xvii. 8. "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder—when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and *yet is!*"

There are two interpretations of this part of the prophecy, on which good commentators have been divided. One is, that the sword by which the beast was wounded was that of the Northern nations in the fifth century, by which Rome under its sixth, or imperial head, was overthrown; but by means of popery the wound was healed, and she who had been given up for lost became in a new form the mistress of the Western world. The other is, that the deadly wound was caused by the sword of Constantine, who having in different engagements defeated his pagan colleagues, subverted the ancient religion of the empire, so that for a few years the beast was as it were dead; but that when under the influence of corruption it again became idolatrous and persecuting, the beast revived, and the world wondered after him.

Till of late I have preferred the first of these interpretations; but upon a closer examination of the prophecy, I am inclined to think the last to be the meaning. It does not seem likely that so extraordinary a change in the empire, and one that so deeply interested the church of God, should be overlooked, while one which is much more ordinary, and of but small account to religion, should be held up to view. It seems also, notwithstanding the corruptions introduced under the first Christian emperors, it were too much to suppose that the empire continued to be the *same* beast as it was in the times of Paganism, or that the difference was so small as not to require any kind of notice in the page of prophesy.

That the species of Christianity introduced in the times of Constantine was injurious to the church is allowed even by those who approve of national religious establishments; yet the prophecy may be very applicable to the event. Supposing this to be its true meaning, there is no countenance given by it to that partial

and corrupt system which at that time was introduced. On the contrary, there is a strong intimation conveyed in those saving terms "as it were," that the beast, though stunned, was not slain. He was not wounded to death, but merely *as it were* wounded to death. As soon as circumstances favoured his recovery, the wound was healed, and the beast recovered his wonted vigour. Ver. 3.

"They worshipped the dragon and the beast." The homage of the world is generally paid to success, though it be in the worst of causes. Those powers which raised and supported the antichristian harlot, being successful, receive the homage of the nations called Christian, though in paying it they sink into the old idolatry under a new name, and in reality worship the wicked one. Ver. 4.

The "great things" spoken by this secular beast may refer to that spirit which gives not God the glory of success, but like Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, arrogates every thing to self. Its "blasphemies" relate to words and assumptions more immediately directed *against God*, and his cause. The charge of blasphemy was preferred against all the *heads* of the beast, (Ver. 1.) though most of them were pagan, and of course unacquainted with the true God. The blasphemies referred to therefore must be not merely his speeches directly uttered against the Great Supreme, but his *arrogating and assuming that which exclusively belongs to him*. This charge is repeated and enlarged upon in ver. 6., where also it is followed with "making war upon the saints." If God had been within reach of the beast, he would have made war with him; but as he was not, his hatred against him was discovered in making war upon his people. A species of practical blasphemy seems to constitute the principle from which all persecution proceeds; for it is no other than usurping the throne of God in the mind of man, This principle has been common through all those pagan and papal governments which have come in contact with the church of God. Nay, is it not exceedingly prevalent in almost all the governments now in being? It is rare, very rare, for those who occupy the supreme place in civil affairs, to respect the claims of conscience and of God. Had

these claims been properly respected, it had never entered the minds of the rulers of any nation that all the people within certain geographical boundaries, should be compelled to worship God in a given way!

The blasphemies of this beast are directed not only against the "name," but against "the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell in heaven," or his celestial attendants. The very saints and angels before the throne are by him represented as rebels against God, by receiving that homage which is due to him, and participating in their abominations. The church of God on earth, relatively considered, or as being his "tabernacle," possesses a sacred character. If any man destroy or defile it, as Antiochus did that of the Jews, him will God destroy. What then must be the guilt contracted by those persecuting powers who, under the pretence of extirpating heresy, have reproached the living God, and done every thing in their power to drive the religion of the Bible out of the world!

The time allotted for the continuance of this beast is "forty and two months." A day being here put for a year, it is the same period as the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" in which the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman to continue in the wilderness.

The war which it was "given him to make with the saints," is the same as that which he is said to have made against the witnesses. Chap. xi. 7. It is that continued series of persecutions which during that part of the 1260 years which has already elapsed, he has been carrying on against the followers of Christ.

As the beast had assumed the place of God, so the multitude consented to treat him as the sovereign lord of conscience, and to be of that religion which he required. In describing this unworthy compliance, however, the Holy Spirit takes care to except "those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life;" thus branding the idolaters with the black mark of reprobation. Such language wears a terrible aspect towards those who enter into the abominations of antichrist, and persevere therein; but a pleasing one towards the chosen of God, who in the worst of times maintain their allegiance to Christ. Ver. 8.

The account of this secular beast, (which from its character of supporting the popish hierarchy may be denominated papal,) here closes with a few words by way of solemn warning.—"If any man have an ear let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints." The persecutor shall soon be persecuted, and the destroyer destroyed; and this not only in the world to come, but even in this world Meanwhile, let the saints know that this is the season for the trial of their patience, and of their faith; the one to bear up under the persecutions of their enemies, and the other to keep in view the crown of life before them. Ver. 9, 10.

DISCOURSE XIX.

THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED; OR, THE BEAST WITH TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB.

Chap. xiii. 11—18.

And I beheld another beast, coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.* 13 *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,* 14 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live.* 15 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

The former of these beasts we have considered as designed to symbolize the Roman empire under its last head, or that secular government which, in connexion with the ten horns or kingdoms of Europe, supported popery through all its foul and bloody deeds; but here arises another beast, diverse from the former, yet acting in concert with him. Daniel, when describing the fourth or Roman beast, speaks of a *little horn* which should grow up as it were insensibly among the ten horns, and displace three of them. John says nothing of this little horn of Daniel, and Daniel is equally

silent about this second beast of John: but from the character given to them both, they appear to be one and the same, namely, *that ecclesiastical power which was to co-exist with the secular, and both assist and be assisted by it.*

This beast is described as "rising out of the earth," in which particular it is distinguished from the other, which "rose out of the sea." For a beast to rise out of the sea is for an empire to rise out of the perturbed state of things in the world, and such was the empire before described: but for one to rise out of the *earth* is for a power to grow up insensibly, like a weed in a garden, out of the established order of things. Such was popery.

"And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon." This perfectly answers to that affectation of Christian meekness, accompanied in reality by the spirit and doctrine of the wicked one. On one occasion it can be *the servant of servants;* on another the deposer of kings, and disposer of empires.

"He exerciseth all the power of the first beast, before, or in the sight of him;" "He is (says Bishop NEWTON) the prime minister, adviser, and mover, of the first or secular beast. He holdeth *imperium in imperio*, an empire within an empire; claimeth a temporal authority as well as a spiritual; hath not only the principal direction of the temporal powers, but often engageth them in his service, and enforceth his canons and decrees with the sword of the civil magistrate.

"He causeth men to worship the first beast." As the secular authority invested the ecclesiastical with power and riches and honours, so in return, the ecclesiastical, by consenting that Christianity should become an engine of state policy, and conscience itself be subjected to its interests, transferred that homage to man which was due only to the eternal God. It is this ecclesiastical influence that has constituted the European nations a continuation of the old Roman empire. It is the only bond which for ages has held them together, so as to render them one great antichristian beast. Ver. 12.

He is next described by his pretended miracles. He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh (or seemeth to make) "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and de-

ceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." This part of his character answers to what was foretold by the apostle of the man of sin that he should come with "signs and lying wonders." All these impositions of "the false prophet," as he is elsewhere called,* being wrought *in the sight of the first beast*, and in that of the people, were to ingratiate himself with them, and to persuade them that he was, as is said of the sorcerer, "the great power of God." While therefore he was professing to honour magistracy, he was labouring to subject it to himself.

To show his devotion to the secular beast, he directs the people to make an image to him; which being done, he after his manner endues it with life, and speech, and great authority: but all is "deceit;" for the object is not to exalt the secular beast, but himself.

This making of an *image* to the beast seems to allude to the heathen practice of making images to the deities. The gods themselves were supposed to be invisible. The same deity had images made to him in divers places. The design of making an image to a god would be to acknowledge him as *their* deity, and to give a visibility and an establishment to his worship. To "make an image to the beast whose deadly wound was healed" would therefore be to give visibility and authority to his worship; or to require implicit obedience to his commands in whose reign *paganism was revived under the name of Catholic Christianity!* It is as guarantee of this system that the first beast is designated by the *healing of his deadly wound*, and that the second beast exerts all his influence in his favour.

It has been observed that while the secular beast is said to make war upon the saints, the ecclesiastical is only said to "*cause* them to be killed." The Council of Lateran decreed not to put heretics to death, but to deliver them over to the secular power to be killed! "The inquisitors, (says BURNET,) on this occasion, with a disgusting affectation of lamb-like meekness, are wont to

* Chap. xvi. 13, 14.

beseech the civil magistrates to show mercy to those whom they themselves have given up to be consigned to the flames!" Ver. 15.

16 *And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:* 17 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.* 18 *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

Such was to be the growing influence of this last beast, that he could "cause" all ranks and degrees of men to enlist under the banners of the first, to receive like soldiers his mark and number, and so to be aiding and assisting in the execution of his measures. Such has actually been the conduct of the Roman hierarchy; so that the common rights of men have been suspended on condition of their receiving the papal badge. Such, in fine, is the nature of the alliance established by this system between the ecclesiastical and the secular powers: each plays into the other's hands: the church consents that religion shall be an engine of state policy, and in return the state supports the church in all her corrupt proceedings.

Respecting the "mark" and the "name" of the beast, it is opposed, I conceive, to the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants. Chap. vii. And as the *seal* and *name* of God on the forehead appear to be the same (Compare Chap. vii. 3. with Chap. xiv. 1.); so may the *mark* and the *name* of the beast. Both are thought to allude to the ancient practice of marking servants and soldiers with their owner's name, in their forehead or in their hand.

I cannot pretend to be certain what is meant by the "*name* of the beast." It may be observed, however, that as the beast here evidently means the *secular*, and not the ecclesiastical power, there is a name given to him in the prophecy. He is called, *The beast that was, and is not, and yet is* (Chap. xvii. 8, 11.); the meaning of which I conceive to be, The government that existed in all its beastly properties as pagan, that appeared to have lost them as

Christian, but that in supporting a corrupted Christianity resumed them. In other words, it is *paganism revived under the form of Catholic Christianity*. Now as the names are signs of character, to have this name or mark of the beast would be the same thing as being openly of this character, or religion.

As to the "number of his name," I have nothing to offer which is fully satisfactory to my own mind. It is something which requires "wisdom and understanding to count it;" and yet by its being "the number of a man," it would seem not to surpass human comprehension. It may be a name whose numerals amount to 666, as the Greek word λατεινος, or other words in which this number has been found: but as this appears to be merely conjecture, I leave it undecided.

DISCOURSE XX.

THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED: OR, THE LAMB'S COMPANY.

Chap. xiv. 1—5.

Unless we consider the whole of the fourteenth chapter as a continuation of the thirteenth, we cannot be said to have a third general view of the rise, reign, and overthrow of popery; for the whole of the *thirteenth* chapter is taken up with a description of its rise and reign, and nothing is said in it of its downfall. Nor is any thing said of the state of the church of Christ during these "forty and two months," save that the beast "made war" with its members and "caused them to be killed." But if the *fourteenth* chapter be considered as a continuation of the subject, we have then a complete view of it, and a most animating description of the state of the church of Christ during the "forty and two months" or 1260 years, in beautiful opposition to the beasts and their followers.

1 *And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

The first of the beasts was a monster, having seven heads and ten horns; a compound of the leopard, the bear, and the

lion. And as to the last, though in respect of its horns it was *like a lamb*, yet it had nothing of the lamb in its nature. What a charming contrast is here; not only between the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdoms of this world, but between a compound of hypocrisy and malignity, and the religion of Jesus Christ. There was sommething *like* a lamb: but lo, *here is a Lamb!*

One of the beasts is described as rising out of the *sea*, and the other out of the *earth;* but the Lamb as standing upon a *mountain*. "Standing" is a reigning posture. Dan. xi. 3. He had been slain, but now "stands up, and rules with great dominion." It also denotes that the party is not only unvanquished, but triumphant. It might have been supposed that from the rising up of these beasts the Lamb should have found no place to exercise his government among men: but he stands his ground, and has his followers, as the beasts have theirs. His kingdom was never overturned, even in the most corrupt ages.

The place on which he stood was "Mount Sion." This is his proper ground, as much as Babylon was of the other. In his church even upon earth, and amidst the sharpest persecutions, the Lamb standeth upon the mount Sion.

The company said to be with him are the same that were sealed in Chap. vii. This sealing was prior to the papal apostasy, and contained an assurance that God would preserve himself a people under it; and lo, after all the ravages of the beasts, here we find them; not in Babylon, but with the Lamb in Sion. The followers of the beast were designated by his mark and the number of his name; and the followers of the Lamb "have his Father's name written in their foreheads." These are the same with the two witnesses, and the woman that fled into the wilderness: they denote the Israel of God; and were that to an apostate church which the twelve tribes who served God day and night were to an apostate world.

In reviewing the dark ages of popery, we are apt to think there could have been but few who clave to the truth in those times: but if the Christian world were again put to such a test of

their sincerity, it were well if the number of the faithful proved greater than in those days. "MEDE (says Bishop NEWTON) hath observed from good authorities, that in the war with the Waldenses and Albigenses there perished in France alone *a million;* from the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1480, that is, in little more than thirty years, *nine hundred thousand.* In the Netherlands alone the Duke of Alva boasted that within a few years he had despatched to the amount of *thirty-six thousand,* and those all by the hand of the common executioner. In the space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed by various kinds of tortures *one hundred and fifty thousand.* Saunders himself, a popish writer, confesses that *an innumerable multitude* of Lollards and Sacramentarians, were burnt throughout all Europe; who yet he says were not put to death by the Pope and Bishops, but by the civil magistrates." That is, the secular beast did the work, and the ecclesiastical only "caused" it! These, and many more whose names will appear another day, composed the company who stood with the Lamb.

2 *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:* 3 *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.*

But hark! A sound is heard—It is from a great distance—It is like the roaring of the sea, or the rolling of thunder—It is the sound of a multitude—There is music—It seems like a *new* song—It is the moving of God's host!—What can be the meaning? If I mistake not, this is a description of the same event which is signified in the first general view by the resurrection of the witnesses, and in the second by the victory of Michael and his angels over the Dragon and his angels; that is to say, *The Reformation of the sixteenth century.* The song intimates that something has occurred which furnishes matter for rejoicing. A *new* song commonly supposes a new or recent deliverance; and to what event during the 1260 years can this be applied, unless it be to the

Reformation? It was then that the army of the Lamb felt its ground, and gloriously triumphed. That which at a distance was only "as it were" a new song, on drawing nearer, proved to be one in reality, and one that none but the redeemed could unite in. The joy attending the Reformation would be confined to the faithful As to worldly men who engaged in it, they would rejoice only as their temporal interests were promoted by it: and as to the devotees of the beasts, they would deplore the dangers of the church: but they who had been reclaimed from the apostasy of their species, and preserved from that of professing Christians, would enter into the spirit of it. In them it was the triumph of faith. The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony would be the burden of the song.

4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.* 5 *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

The Lamb's company are here particularly characterized. *First*, By the things from which they had been preserved; namely, *spiritual fornication and adultery*, into which the generality of professing Christians had fallen. *Secondly*, By the course they had pursued. They followed the Lamb whithersoever he went: in his doctrine, worship, afflictions, spirit, and conduct, he was their example. *Thirdly*, By the distinguished blessings conferred upon them. They were "redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." They were the travail of his soul, in which he was satisfied. In them appeared the efficacy of his death; while others, though calling themselves Christians, still continued under the worst of bondage. And as in the law of the first-fruits a part was accepted for the whole; so when that which called itself the church apostatized, those who continued faithful were accepted as the Christian church, or reckoned as the Lord's portion. *Fourthly*, By their sincerity and purity. "In their mouth was found no guile; for they were without fault before the throne of God." While

the followers of the beasts were trimming and worshipping, as their worldly interests required, these were upright before God in all their conversation.

Such is the contrast between the beast and the blasphemies of his worshippers on the one hand, and the Lamb and the praises of his followers on the other.

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONCLUDED: OR, THE MESSAGES OF THE THREE ANGELS, THE HARVEST, AND THE VINTAGE.

Chap. xiv. 6—20.

If the foregoing application of the new song of the Lamb's company to the *Reformation* in the sixteenth century be just, it may be expected that what follows will relate to events subsequent to that distinguished era.

6 *And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,* 7 *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

I am aware that this commission of the flying angel has been generally understood as addressed to papal idolaters, and the passage of course applied to the evangelical labours of the Reformers. The fall of Babylon and the warnings against worshipping the beast and his image which follow, may have led to this application. There are other things however, which have led me to consider "the angel flying in the midst of heaven" as sent to pagan rather than to papal idolaters.

It is true, we are in danger of magnifying the events of our own times, and of expecting to find things occupying a conspicuous place in prophecy which upon the great chart of the divine proceedings may have no place, or at most be only as a speck. I have not sought however for any thing which might be applied to the events of present times, nor interpreted the passage in any other than what appears to be its most natural meaning.

There are four characters pertaining to the prophecy, some of which appear to be inapplicable to the evangelical labours of the Reformers, but which are all applicable to the attempts to evangelize the heathen. 1. The parties to whom the message is sent are not merely the nations of Europe, but EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE. 2. The message itself seems to intimate that they had hitherto read only the book of nature, and that without learning from it so much as WHO MADE THE HEAVENS, AND THE EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS. 3. It is supposed that when the spread of the gospel should be attempted in good earnest, and in a humble dependence upon God, *difficulties* which before seemed insuperable would subside. The church has long felt too much like the unbelieving Israelites in respect of going up to possess the promised land. Giants have seemed in the way, and walls reaching up to heaven: but when the work is attempted in the name of Christ, it is like *an angel flying in the midst of heaven*, whose course none are able to arrest. 4. The *tone* in which the nations are addressed is solemn and imperious. "The hour of his judgment is come!" There was something resembling this when the gospel was first announced, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, &c." * The kingdom of the Messiah was then at hand, but now it draws near in its most extended form; and those nations and governments that will not bow to him shall be dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel! It is now coming to this, that "All they that go down to the dust shall bow

* Matt. iii. 2. Acts xvii. 30, 31.

before him: and none can keep alive his own soul:"—which as our poet expresses it, is equal to saying—

> And all the kindreds of the earth
> Shall worship, or shall die!

The desire which had been kindled of late years to carry the gospel among the heathen does not appear to be an object unworthy a place in prophecy. It has engaged the attention of a large portion of the Christian church, and excited more earnest prayer and disinterested exertion, than perhaps any thing which has occurred since the Reformation. Nor ought we to consider what has hitherto been done as any thing more than the commencement of the angel's flight. It has indeed for its *object* the evangelizing of "*every* nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;" but at present this is far from being accomplished. We have seen enough, however, to convince us with what ease the great God, by touching the hearts of a few individuals, can accomplish it.

8 *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

This is the first time that mention is made of *Babylon.* The allusion doubtless is to old Babylon, by which the church was formerly oppressed; and to the predictions of her fall as given by the prophets:* but the Babylon here referred to doubtless is Rome, considered as the head of that great antichristian community which has corrupted the religion of Christ, and persecuted his followers.

There may be no such immediate connexion between the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the heathen world and the fall of antichristian Babylon, as that the latter should be the effect of the former: but it may comport with the wisdom of God to render it a comcomitant. When the servants of Christ lay themselves out for his name in one way, it is not unusual with him to promote the same general object in another. If we seek first the kingdom of

* Isa. xxi. 9. Jer. li. 8.

God and his righteousness, temporal blessings are added unto us; and thus if we lay ourselves out in extending his cause among the heathen, he may at the same time, by his providence, be working in another quarter the overthrow of that which is opposed to it.

The cry of the angel does not denote that Babylon would be *immediately* and *entirely* destroyed at this time; for if so, the warnings of the third angel, which follow, would be unnecessary. Besides, it is by the *harvest* and the *vintage*, towards the close of the chapter, that the overthrow will be effected. But the church is here called upon to *expect* it, and to observe the course of events as preparing the way for it.

9 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand,* 10 *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the the Lamb:* 11 *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.* 12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* 13 *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

This is the language of solemn warning. It is addressed to all whom it concerns, good and bad, especially to those who live at the time here referred to; the time immediately preceding the fall of the antichristian power, and so looks with a severe aspect on those who persevere in their attachment to it, notwithstanding the light which will have been diffused in the world. They who at *any period* surrender their consciences to human authority, and fully imbibe the antichristian system, will incur the wrath of God: but they who do this in the face of that light which by this time will be spread through the world, will incur greater degrees of the divine displeasure than those who have been carried away with it

in darker ages. The 12th and 13th verses would seem to portend a time of *persecution* prior to the final overthrow of the antichristian power; a time which may be as the last struggles of the beast. This is the flood cast out of the mouth of the dragon after the woman (Chap. xii. 15.); the gathering together of the "kings of the earth and of the whole world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty (Chap. xvi. 14.); and the *war* made by the beast and the kings against him who sat upon the horse, and against his army." Chap. xix. 19.

14 *And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.* 15 *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* 16 *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.* 17 *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.* 18 *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.* 19 *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.* 20 *And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

The angels have delivered their messages, and now the Lord himself appears. He comes as it were to judgment, and to the antichristian party a terrible judgment it will be. Under the symbols of a *harvest* and a *vintage*, is predicted its utter overthrow. Whatever distinction there may be between the one and the other, both I doubt not refer to that series of calamities which is reserved to destroy the beast and his adherents. They refer to the same things which have been noticed from Chap. xi. 18; when the wrath of God was come, and the time of the dead that they should be avenged, and those destroyed who had long de-

stroyed the earth. This being a general description of events which will be more particularly set fourth under the pouring out of the vials, we shall find them again under "the battle of Armageddon, or the great day of God Almighty" (Chap. xvi.); also in the "supper of the Great God," to which the fowls are invited, and in which "the beast and the false prophet are taken." Chap. xix.

One thing is remarkable in both the harvest and the vintage, they indicate that the papal abominations shall be *ripe, fully ripe.* There is a tendency to maturity in both good and evil, in individuals and communities, and even in the world itself. Popery matured is infidelity. To this it tends, and here it will probably land the great body of its adherents. I see no solid ground for Mr. Faber's hypothesis of an *infidel king*, any more than of an *infidel antichrist.* The historical exposition of the xith chapter of Daniel by Prideaux (*Connexion Part II. Book II, III.*) appearing to me to be the true one: but I have no doubt that infidelity is, and will be, the distinguishing feature of the last times. What is said of the "scoffers of the last times" is indeed descriptive of what we daily witness; but it is only of individuals that these things are spoken. Infidelity does not appear to be symbolized in the scriptures, either by a *beast*, a *horn*, or a *king:* it is merely the papal beast grown old, or popery as having produced its proper fruits, which fruits may be the appointed means of its destruction.

DISCOURSE XXII.

INTRODUCTION TO THE VIALS.

Chap. xv.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.* 3 *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.* 4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.* 5 *And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:* 6 *And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.* 7 *And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.* 8 *And the temple was*

filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Three general descriptions having been given of the antichristian power, each of which carried us to the end of the 1260 years, the series of the prophecy *from the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet* is now resumed. This trumpet, it has been observed before, wears a two-fold aspect. It is partly a woe-trumpet, and partly the harbinger of joy. The seven vials are a part of it, and answer to the former view. The other part comprehends the success of the gospel preparatory to the Millennium, the Millennium itself, and all that follows to the end of the prophecy, and answers to the latter view. At present we are to consider it as a woe-trumpet, or as comprehending the seven vials; which, containing a *more particular* account of the judgments already hinted at towards the end of the general descriptions, will, like them, bring us to the close of the 1260 years.

The angels with the vials are called "a sign in heaven, great and marvellous," because the judgments which follow are signal and fearful, and the times very eventful, so as deeply to interest the church of God.

The seven vials are denominated "the seven *last plagues, in which will be filled up the wrath of God.*" This supposes that in various instances God had already poured forth his wrath upon these antichristian powers, but that this should be the FINISHING BLOW. Hence it follows that we are not to consider these vials as including *all* those plagues which at different periods have been poured upon the antichristian party, but merely *those which shall bring it to its end.* As the vials are a subdivision of the third and last woe-trumpet, they could not begin to be poured out till that trumpet was sounded: and as they are emphatically called the seven *last* plagues, they must refer to the latter end of the 1260 years. In short, they are the particulars of what was signified under the general representations by God's wrath being come, and the time of the dead that they should be avenged—and by the harvest and the vintage. Chapters xi. and xiv.

All those expositions of the vials, therefore, which suppose them to have been pouring out at different periods from the beginning of the 1260 years appear to me to be founded in mistake. The farthest point to which we can look back for the commencement of these calamities may be found to be within the last five and twenty years. Ver. 1.

The "sea of glass mingled with fire" is the same which is said in Chap. iv. 6. to have been before the throne. It is opposed, I conceive, to that perturbed element from which the beast arose; and describes the pure, calm, and triumphant state of those who have overcome. The striking up of the heavenly choir on this occasion was to express the great good that should arise from these evils. The song they sing is that of "Moses and the Lamb." As the song of Moses at the Red Sea magnified the victory of the Lord over the Egyptians, so this song will celebrate the triumph of the Lamb and of his followers over enemies of a similar character. If the works of God in redeeming his people from the long and hard bondage of Egypt were "great and marvellous," much more so would they be in delivering his saints from the long and hard bondage of "that great city which is spiritually called Egypt;" and if his "ways were just and true" in the former instance, they would be still more manifestly so in the latter. Ver. 2, 3.

It is not in malignity towards any creature, but in love to God, whose honour had for so long a time been trampled under foot, that these heavenly minds rejoice; not for the evil considered as evil, but for the good that should arise from it. Hence, anticipating the righteousness which the world shall learn when these judgments are abroad in the earth, they triumphantly ask, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." By this language we are given to expect that *the judgments on the antichristian powers, in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, will contribute to the universal spread of the true religion over the face of the earth.* Ver. 4.

As the throne of the God of Israel was in the holy of holies, so his throne in heaven is described as in his temple; and as when

the High Priest entered into the former once a year he saw the ark of the testimony, so the heavenly temple being opened, the apostle looked, and saw the seven angels come out from before the throne, as having received their commission. They are described as "clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." Nothing could better express the state of their *minds* in executing the divine displeasure. God had sometimes employed evil angels to execute his will, even towards his own people, as in the case of Job, and in such instances they have been certain to discover their malignity. But when good angels execute the divine will, though it be upon his worst enemies, they have no malignant bitterness, but are influenced purely by the love of God and righteousness. Ver. 5, 6.

Next to the description of the messengers follows the delivering to them their respective messages: and this was from the hand of one of the four living creatures who represented redeemed men. God does not usually employ his people in this world to overthrow either corrupt churches or antichristian governments. This is a kind of work not suited to them. They must however have some concern in it. Their prayers for deliverance are answered by terrible things in righteousness upon their persecutors; and to all the judgments of God they must add their cordial *Amen*. Ver. 7.

The effect of the delivery of these messages is described as "filling the temple with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, so that no man could enter it." "This cloud (says Dr. GUYSE) appeared like a thick smoke, awfully glorious, which was a symbol of the divine vengeance, (Psa. xviii. 8.) as going forth from the presence of the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the murmuring Israelites (Numb. xvi. 19, 42.); and as Moses could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple, while the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, (Exod. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii. 11.) so no one could enter into

this heavenly temple to intercede for the preventing of these grievous calamities upon the beast: none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have its free course, till all the seven punishments to be inflicted by the ministry of the seven angels were fully executed in their order."

DISCOURSE XXIII.

ON THE VIALS.

Chap. xvi. 1—9.

I ENTER upon this part of the subject with diffidence, because I consider the events predicted as mostly future: and the exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, especially when couched under symbolical language, is rarely accurate. When in looking at a symbol we compare it with facts, we can judge of the one as being designed to predict the other: but in looking at the symbols without the facts, we can seldom make much out in explaining them. Nor does it appear to have been the design of prophecy to enable us to foresee things with any considerable degree of precision; but to keep up a general hope before the accomplishment, and to strengthen our faith after it.

1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

Before entering on particulars, I shall offer two or three general remarks—

First, Some of these "plagues," and it may be the greater part of them, will consist in *wars* between the nations of Christendom. Such is doubtless the meaning of those in which mention is made of "blood," and of the "battle of Armageddon, the great day of

God Almighty." It is thus that the nations which have shed the blood of his saints will have blood given them to drink!

Secondly, As the grand design of these wars is the destruction of the antichristian hierarchy, they may be expected to have a *providential direction* given to them, causing them to bear more especially upon that object. If this remark be just, it furnishes a presumption that the vials have been pouring out for the last twenty years. As a fire kindled in a city has a direction given to its ravages, by the wind, or by some other means; so Providence has caused the desolations of the Continent to bear principally, though not entirely, upon the papal cause.

Thirdly, The resemblances between the vials and the trumpets may throw more light upon the subject than any other medium of which we are in possession. It is a fact very remarkable that the seven trumpets have each a point of resemblance with the seven vials—For example, The first trumpet affected *the earth;* and so does the first vial.* The second trumpet turned *the sea into blood;* and the second vial was poured out upon *the sea*, which became *as the blood of a dead man.*† The third trumpet affected *the rivers and fountains of water;* and so does the third vial.‡ The fourth trumpet respected *the sun;* and the fourth vial does the same.§ The fifth trumpet was followed by *darkness and pain;* and such were the effects of the fifth vial.‖ The sixth trumpet was complex, relating partly to the depredations of the Euphratean horsemen in the East, and partly to the idolatries and persecutions of the beast and his associates in the West; and so is the sixth vial; relating partly to the Euphratean waters being dried up, and partly to the battle of Armageddon, by which the cause of the beasts will be ruined.¶ Finally, The seventh trumpet presents *a closing scene;* and so does the seventh vial.** These resemblances cannot be accidental. Though they refer to events, therefore, more than a thousand years distant from each other,

* Compare Chap. viii. 7. with xvi. 2. † Chap. viii. 8. with xvi. 3. ‡ Chap. viii. 10, 11. with xvi. 4. § Chap. viii. 12. with xvi. 8, 9. ‖ Chap. ix. 1, 3. with xvi. 10. ¶ Chap. ix. 14—xi. 14. with xvi. 12—16. ** Chap. xi. 15. with xvi. 17.

yet there must be some important points of likeness between them; and as the trumpets are all, except the last, fulfilled, we may by means of them form some judgment of the vials which yet may be unfulfilled.

It was on this principle that Dr. GILL seems to have proceeded in expounding the vials. "The first vial (says he) will be poured out upon *the earth*, and designs those popish countries which are upon the *Continent*, as France and Germany, especially the latter: and as the first trumpet brought the Goths into Germany, so the first vial will bring great distress upon the popish party in the empire.—The second vial will be poured upon *the sea*, and may intend the *maritime* powers belonging to the church of Rome, particularly Spain and Portugal: and as the second trumpet brought the Vandals into these places, so this vial will affect the same, and bring wars and desolations into them.—The third vial will be poured out upon *the rivers and fountains of waters*, which may point to those places adjacent to Rome, as Italy and Savoy: and as the the third trumpet brought the Huns into those parts, so this vial will bring in large armies hither, which will cause much bloodshed, and a great revolution in church and state."*

This comment on the vials, founded upon their analogy with the trumpets, bids fair, in my judgment, to be the true one; especially that on the first three which has just been quoted.

The Doctor adds—"As yet I take it none of them are poured out, though some great and learned men have thought otherwise. As yet there have been no such devastations on the Continent, as in France and Germany, as to produce the above effects; nor in the countries of Spain, Portugal, &c." This was doubtless the case in 1752, the year in which the Sermon from which the above extract is made was printed, but this is more than can be said in 1810!

2 *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

* Sermon on the glory of the Church in the latter day. pp. 12—15.

If by the "earth" be meant "the *Continent*, as France and Germany, especially the latter," (and I know of no interpretation more natural,) we have certainly seen a succession of evils falling upon the men who "had the mark of the beast," first in France, and after that in Germany, grievous as the most "noisome sores," and like them indicative of a state of corruption and approaching dissolution.

3 *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.*

If this vial respect the papal *maritime* nations, particularly Spain and Portugal, (and here also I know of no interpretation more natural) we have seen a commencement of things in those countries, but have not yet seen the issue. What it will be God knoweth. Whether this or that political party prevail, it will be a plague, and a plague that will tend to accomplish the ruin of the antichristian cause.

There is a circumstance of additional horror in this vial, which was not in its correspondent trumpet: the blood into which this "sea" would be turned is described as stagnant, "as the blood of a dead man;" as though such a quantity should be shed as not only to tinge, but to congeal the ocean, turning it as it were into a putrid mass!

4 *And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.* 5 *And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.* 6 *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.* 7 *And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

If *the rivers and fountains of waters* denote "Italy and Savoy," these countries may be expected to be the scene of the next great convulsions which shall agitate Europe. And if it be so, it may be a just retribution for the blood of the Waldenses, which was there shed in shocking profusion for many successive centuries.

The responsive language of the angels on this occasion, accords with such an interpretation, and is exceedingly impressive. It shows in what light the persecution of the faithful is viewed in heaven. This sin implies such a hatred of God and his image, as would, if he were within reach, dethrone and kill him! Unjust war is a great sin: it is murder on an extended scale: yet it is not to be named in comparison of persecution for Christ's sake. The one is destroying God's natural image; but the other is aimed at his moral image. In the former "the potsherd striveth with the potsherds of the earth: but in the latter man striveth with his Maker! This was the sin which crowned the wicked life of Herod the tetrarch, who to all his other crimes "added this *above all*, that he shut up John in prison!" Blood shed in persecution of God's servants hath a cry which must sooner or later be heard. The persecutions of former ages may be forgotten by men: but he, "who is, and was, and shall be," will not forget them. The judgments of our own times are examples of this: all Europe, previous to the Reformation, was stained with the blood of the martyrs; and since that memorable era, France, and Germany, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, have been deeply engaged in that impious practice. Is it surprising then that all Europe in measure, and those nations in particular which have persisted in it, should be made to drink the bloody draught? While we feel, and ought to feel, for suffering humanity, it is not for us to join with the merchants of the earth in their wailings; but rather with the angels in heaven, saying, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus!"

8 *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.* 9 *And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.*

In discoursing upon the trumpets it was observed, that the Roman empire, then become the seat of Christianity, was considered as a world of itself; having not only its *earth*, its *sea*, and its *rivers*, but its *sun*, and *moon*, and *stars*; symbols of its supreme and sub-

ordinate governments.* When the sun was eclipsed on the sounding of the fourth trumpet it signified the fall of the imperial authority: but the fourth vial, though poured upon the sun, yet unlike its corresponding trumpet, does not terminate upon it, but upon the people on whom it shines. The sun here, instead of being eclipsed, or having its power diminished, has it increased. Its heat is rendered more intense so as to become a plague to those who are under its influence.

By the "sun," is undoubtedly to be understood of the supreme secular government of what is called *the Holy Roman Empire*, which is denominated *the beast*, and distinguished by its carrying or supporting the harlot. Its scorching heat cannot be understood of the persecution of the faithful; for they would not "blaspheme" under it. It would seem therefore to be the galling tyranny by which the adherents of the beast will be oppressed; while yet they repent not of their deeds.

* Chap. viii. 6—12. p. 84.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE VIALS, CONTINUED.

Chap. xvi. 10—21.

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness: and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 *And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

By the "beast" we have all along understood that secular government which at the head of the other European governments has *supported the papal antichrist.* This certainly has not been the imperial government of France, but of Germany, to which therefore the character of *the beast* belongs. The station from which his influence and authority proceeds will be his "seat," or throne, or we may say his *den.* And that which the swellings of Jordan were to the lions which made their dens among the thickets growing upon its margin,* that will this plague be to him, causing him, if not to quit his den with howlings, yet to be very miserable in it. This is intimated by his "kingdom being full of darkness," and by their "gnawing their tongues for pain." The supporters of the papal cause will be confounded. Darkness and anguish will come upon them. Yet being given up, like Pharaoh, to hardness of heart, they will continue to blaspheme the God of heaven, and will not repent of their deeds. These blasphemies

* Jer. xlix. 19.

and this perseverance in impenitence are sure signs of its being the determination of Heaven to destroy them. Individuals may repent and escape; but as a community they are appointed to utter destruction.

12 *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.* 13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* 14 *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.* 15 *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.* 16 *And they gathered them together, into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.*

This vial, as far as respects the *temporal* dominion of Christ's enemies, possesses a final character; and seems partly to respect the overthrow of the Turkish power, signified by the "drying up of the waters of the Euphrates," and partly that of the papal, signified by the battle of "Armageddon," or of that "great day of God Almighty."

With regard to the first, as the sixth trumpet respected the rise of the Turkish power to punish the Eastern church, so the sixth vial seems to denote its overthrow, along with that of the Western church. The drying up of waters fitly expresses that diminution of strength and defence in a nation which issues in destruction. Thus when God would destroy Babylon, he saith, "A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up—I will dry up her sea, and will make her springs dry. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant."* "The kings of the east" may denote those who shall be employed in overthrowing this power, as the armies of Cyrus and Darius, on the waters of the Euphrates being diverted, were employed in overthrowing Babylon.

* Jer. l. 38. li. 36, 37.

I have expressed a doubt whether either the doctrines or the wars of Mahomet would have had a place in this prophecy but for their relation to the Christian church ;* and I think it questionable whether the downfall of the Turks would have been noticed but on the same account. This was the reason of so much being said of old Babylon. She might have risen and fallen unnoticed by the prophets, if she had had nothing to do with Jerusalem. But though she was an instrument in God's hand in purging that corrupted city, yet seeing that she "meant not so," but set herself against God himself, it required that she should in the end be overthrown, and that her overthrow should be marked in prophecy. In like manner, though Mahomet and his followers were instruments in punishing a corrupt part of the Christian church, yet seeing they meant not so, but set themselves against Christ himself, they also shall be overthrown, and their ovorthrow is marked in prophecy.

With regard to the second part of this vial, or that which respects the *papal* powers, this is the most tremendous. This is the last struggle of the beast and his adherents, and which will issue in their utter overthrow. This is "the great day of God Almighty ;" the same as the *harvest* and the *vintage* in Chap. xiv. and the "taking of the beast and the false prophet" in Chap. xix.

Preparatory to this great day we have *The mustering of the forces*—"Three unclean spirits like frogs," are described as going forth amongst the nations to gather them together ; one from the mouth of the dragon, another from that of the beast, and another from that of the false prophet. These *spirits* may denote the corrupt *principles* which shall be disseminated in the *earth*, tending to deceive and destroy mankind. As the *dragon* is described as the grand mover of all these mischiefs, as he is not said to be taken with the beast and the false prophet in Chap. xix. and is denominated "that old serpent the Devil and Satan ;" I consider him as a being of a different order from either of them. And as the unclean spirit which proceeded from the dragon may be supposed to correspond with his character, it may be a spirit of *diabolical malignity against God and true religion.*—The *beast* being understood of the last head of the Roman empire, the great supporter

* On Chap. ix. 13—21.

of popery, the unclean spirit proceeding out of his mouth may be *that which assumes the place of God in the consciences of men, and converts Christianity into an engine of state policy.* The *false prophet*, though designated by a new name, appears to be the same that was represented in Chap. xiii. by the two-horned beast, and in 2 Thes. ii. 3. by "the man of sin." This is evident from the character of each being the same. The coming of the man of sin was to be with "signs and lying wonders." The two-horned beast "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of his miracles;" and amongst the operations of the three evil spirits mention is made of "miracles," which seem to pertain to the false prophet. The man of sin, the two-horned beast, and the false prophet, therefore, are the same, namely, the papal hierarchy, or the community of which the Pope is the head. The evil spirit proceeding out of his mouth may be that of *blind zeal, and religious imposture.*

These three evil spirits, discordant as they may be in some respects, will be united in their opposition to true religion. Hence in the great battle wherein the beast and the false prophet are taken, (Chap. xix.) (and which, as has been observed, is the same as this at Armageddon,) the whole triumvirate is engaged "against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." It shall be a character it seems of these times that both the friends and enemies of Christ will be nearer together than they have been wont to be: irreligion and false religion will unite their standards, and fight with neither small nor great, but with Christ and his adherents. Where men agree in the grand outlines of false doctrine, and conceive themselves to meet in their political interests they caneasily overlook their differences.

It seems as if a spirit of infatuation, like that in Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea, would possess the enemies of Christ prior to this their last overthrow. The kings of the earth are gathered together, partly by hatred of God and religion, (the spirit of the dragon,) partly by the desire of subjugating both to political purposes, (the spirit of the beast,) and partly by blind zeal and religious imposture, (the spirit

of the false prophet,) and being assembled, will direct all their force against God and his cause. In what particular mode their hostility will be manifested, and by what means Christ will prevail against them, is too much for us to determine. The first may be by direct persecution, or if by war, it will be one whose object shall be to exterminate the true religion ; and the last may be by turning their hearts one against another. Though they have been gathered together, and have unitedly engaged in this notable enterprise, yet finding it unsuccessful, they may fall out with one another. The spirit of the dragon may prevail over that of the beast and that of the false prophet, and he may think to govern the world without them. The antichristian kings also perceiving how things are going, may be for joining the strongest side. But if so, they will find themselves deceived. The next vial will purify the world of their baleful influences, and the Angel with a great chain in his hand stands ready to lay hold on the dragon himself and to cast him into the bottomless pit.

The warning language addressed to the faithful (ver. 15.) seems to intimate that these important events will come upon men unexpectedly, and that many will be stripped by them of their professions and prospects. Blessed are they whose religion will stand the test of such times of trial.

17 *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.* 18 *And there were voices and thunders and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.* 19 *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.* 20 *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.* 21 *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

As the sixth vial has issued in the overthrow of the temporal power of antichrist, the seventh seems to respect its *spiritual* dominion, or the hold which it has on the minds of men. *

The moral atmosphere of the world has long been polluted by false religion, from which it seems to be the object of this vial to cleanse it as by a thunder-storm, which thunder-storm produces a great earthquake, and this the falling to pieces of the great anti-christian city, and other cities with it. The face of the world from hence becomes changed, and the wrath of God pursues, as by a terrible hail-storm, the men who repent not of their deeds.

Nor may this purification of the moral atmosphere be confined to Christendom, but extend to the whole earth. Paganism, Mahometanism, apostate Judaism, and every thing which stands opposed to the truth shall now be driven out of the world. An "earthquake" is the well-known symbol of a revolution; and so great and mighty a revolution of religious principle, may well justify the description given of it. And now a voice out of the temple of heaven, even from the throne of God, is heard, saying, IT IS DONE! The threatening of the angel in Chap. x. 7. is accomplished—the 1260 years are ended—THE MYSTERY OF GOD IS FINISHED!

As this vial seems to be wholly of a *spiritual* nature, the "thunders and lightnings and earthquake and hail" do not seem to refer to wars, or to any other temporal calamities, but it may be to the effects of truth, and to those *spiritual judgments* which will fall on them who continue to reject it. The *body* of antichrist, as I may say, will be destroyed by the temporal sword, as described under the preceding vial; but the "spirit of Christ's mouth" shall destroy his *spirit*. Such from the beginning was the doom passed upon that wicked one; and such is the punishment of those who escape in the great battle wherein the beast and false prophet shall be taken, but who repent not of their deeds: they

* That these are very distinct, we need go no farther than Ireland for proof. Popery has there long existed not only without the aid of temporal power, but in a manner against it; yet there are few if any countries, where it has faster hold of the minds of men.

shall be "slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth." Chap. xix. 21.

The city being "divided into three parts," as by an earthquake, denotes, I think, the breaking up of the papal system; and what "the cities of the nations" which fall with it can be understood to mean but those worldly establishments of religion which have symbolized with popery, not only in worship and ceremonies, but in an *alliance with the kingdoms of this world*, I cannot conceive. To understand "the great city" of the Roman *empire*, and "the cities of the nations" of *particular states*, neither comports with the meaning of the terms in other parts of the prophecy, nor with the *spiritual* judgments denoted by this vial. "The great city" is mentioned in several other places in the prophecy—as in Chap. xi. 8. "Their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of *the great city*, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."—And in Chap. xiv. 8. "Babylon is fallen, *that great city*."—And in Chap. xviii. 10, 21. "Alas, *that great city*, Babylon."—"Thus with violence shall *that great city* Babylon be thrown down." In none of these passages does it appear to mean the *empire*, but the *church* of Rome. The empire is symbolized by a *beast*, from which *the great city* is distinguished. Chap. xi. 7, 8. But if "the great city" mean the Church of Rome, even "great Babylon who now comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath," "the cities of the nations" must mean those ecclesiastical communities which have symbolized with her.

DISCOURSE XXV.

THE GREAT HARLOT, AND THE BEAST THAT CARRIETH HER.

Chap. xvii.

HAVING gone through the vials, we have arrived at the commencement of the Millennium. Indeed we descended to this period in each of the three general descriptions, and in the pouring out of the vials have only retraced the latter part of the ground more particularly. All that remains between this and the 20th chapter would in modern publications be called *notes of illustration.* No new subject is introduced, but mere enlargement on what has already been announced. We have heard much of the beast in the 13th chapter; but in the 17th we have a still more particular account of him, and of the woman that sitteth upon him, without which we should not have been able to understand the other. We had a hint given us of the fall of Babylon in the 14th chapter; but in the 18th and part of the 19th we have a triumphant ode, sent as it were from heaven, to be sung on the occasion. Finally, we have been given to expect in the 14th chapter, that prior to the overthrow of the antichristian cause the gospel would be making progress; but in the 19th we see the Word of God going forth, riding upon a white horse, and the antichristian powers destroyed in the very act of opposing him.

The first of these *illustrative notes*, as we shall call them, is contained in the 17th chapter; and respects the leading characters of the antichristian party.

1 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters;* 2 *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* 3 *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.* 4 *And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:* 5 *And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* 6 *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

The object of this vision was not to gratify curiosity, but to show the justice of those plagues which were, or were about to be inflicted.

The opprobrious name given to the woman determines its reference to a corrupt and false church, as opposed to "the bride the Lamb's wife." Her "sitting upon many waters," and which are said to be "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues," (Ver. 15.) prove that this corrupt and false church would not be confined to a single city, or nation, but would extend over a number of nations. The "kings of the earth that have committed fornication with her," are all those governments which are or have been within the pale of her communion, and which till the Reformation included the whole of Western Europe, "the great Gothic family," as they have been denominated. It is this their idolatrous communion with her that is called fornication. Those who have been "made drunk with the wine of her fornication"

are those who have drunk into her doctrines, worship, spirit, and practices, and have become as it were intoxicated by them.

To have a view of this harlot, the apostle is carried in vision "into the wilderness." She was represented before as sitting upon many waters; but as she is now to be described as riding upon a beast, it is proper that it should be upon the earth. Though the imagery however is changed, yet the meaning may be much the same: for a wilderness, no less than many waters, signifies peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. Hence the nations into which Judah was carried captive are called "the wilderness of the people."* For the apostle to be carried into the wilderness may be equal to his being placed in the midst of the nations of Europe, say in London, Paris, Madrid, or Vienna, at a time when papal Rome was in all her glory.

Being in the wilderness, he sees a woman sitting upon a beast which beast was caparisoned with scarlet trappings, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. This beast is manifestly the same as that which is described in the 13th chapter, as "rising out of the sea," and is no other than *the Roman empire under its last head, or form of government, or that which has been known in history, as the Western, or Holy Roman Empire, in connexion with the kingdoms of Europe, which are its ten horns.* It is this government which has given the title of *emperor*, sometimes to a king of one nation, and sometimes of another; but whoever has possessed it, he has been considered as the grand supporter of the papal hierarchy.

It is said that the ancient pagan emperors were wont to be dressed in "scarlet" in times of war; a fit attire then for a bloody period, and now for a bloody persecuting government. Its "names of blasphemy" express its impious and antichristian character, assuming the throne of God in the minds and consciences of men.

The "purple and scarlet, and gold, and precious stones, and pearls" with which the woman was arrayed, allude no doubt to the attire of an harlot of no ordinary rank. The design is to describe her as being of the world, and seeking the things of the world, or as contriving by her meretricious ornaments to dazzle the

* Ezek. xx. 35.

eyes of her beholders. It is by that ceremonious pomp, splendour, and will-worship, which have often been defended under the name of *decency*, and deemed necessary, both to gratify the taste of the polite and to excite the admiration of the vulgar, that false religion makes its way. The "golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" are her corrupt principles and idolatrous practices, recommended by her seducing emoluments. The "name on her forehead" is thought to allude to the ancient practice of harlots, who not only used to put their names on their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads. It is expressive not only of the general character of the antichristian church, but of her impudence; practising day by day the foulest and filthiest impostures, and yet calling herself the Holy Catholic Church, and denying salvation to all without her pale! The name of "mystery" was given to this apostasy by Paul as well as John, and with this very proper exposition, "The mystery of iniquity." The system is full of "the depths of Satan," which it is an honour not to know.—She is farther denominated "Babylon the great." Here we see that the apocalyptic Babylon and the harlot are the same: it is Rome, as an antichristian community extending over many nations. What Babylon was to the Old Testament church she is to the New; and such will be her end.—Finally, She is denominated "The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." There are other corrupt churches as well as that of Rome; but she is the principal, and the parent of them, the harlot of harlots. Not only by "forbidding to marry" does she open the floodgates to illicit commerce between the sexes, and even to unnatural crimes, but sells indulgences and pardons in the name of Jesus Christ!

To complete the character of this mother of harlots, she is described as making others intoxicated, and as being herself "drunken with the blood of the saints!" Persecution is the crowning sin of the greatest sinners.

The apostle having beheld her, "wondered with great admiration," as well he might. So much wickedness, be it committed by whom it might, was wonderful; but who could have thought that this was a picture of what would be called *The Holy Catholic*

Church, in whose pale only was salvation ! ! ! The Christian church was an object dear to him : what then must be his feelings to be told that it should come to this !

7 *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel ? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

The answer of the angel is designed to allay the admiration of the apostle ; and this it does by accounting for what had been seen. When Hazael wondered at his own predicted cruelties, and scarcely thought them possible, he was told in answer, " The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." This was answer sufficient ; and that of the angel resembles it. The character of the woman is accounted for by her alliance with the beast. Let the Christian church consider this, and tremble at such alliances !

8 *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition : and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* 9 *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.* 10 *And there are seven kings : five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come ; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* 11 *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

Having given an account of the woman, the angel proceeds to describe " the beast that carrieth her." This no doubt is the Roman empire, described as the " beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Prior to the overthrow of paganism by Constantine, it *was*—it was that idolatrous, blasphemous, persecuting power which Daniel had foretold. From that period, professing to become a Christian government, the properties of the beast were as it were laid aside, and it *was not*. Such was its character from the days of Constantine to the revelation of the man of sin. It might have been denominated *the beast that was, and is not ; or the late pagan, but now Christian empire.* But not

withstanding this his profession of Christianity, his origin is "the bottomless pit," and his end "perdition." He may deceive the blinded multitude with his pretences of being *not* that which he once was; but, as the angel informs the apostle, he *yet is*. He had indeed "a wound by a sword," which was thought at the time to be mortal, but it did not prove so. The corruptions of Christianity healed it, and all the properties of the beast revived in their wonted vigour.

The angel proceeds to inform the apostle more particularly concerning the "seven heads" of the beast, and intimates that in understanding this subject there will be employment for "wisdom." They are said first to be "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." This determines the seat of the hierarchy to be Rome, well known as standing, when in its full extent, upon seven hills. They are also said to be "seven kings," or forms of government, under which the empire had subsisted, did subsist, or would hereafter subsist. The forms which had subsisted, (as has been observed on Chap. xiii.) were *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemvirs*, and *Military Tribunes;* the form which subsisted at the time of the commencement of the prophecy was that of *Emperors;* and that which was yet to come, and to "continue a short space," seems to be that non-descript government which succeeded the overthrow of the Emperors, and continued in divers forms for about three hundred years, till the establishment of that government which from the days of Charlemagne to the Reformation, a space of above seven hundred years, combined all the nations of Europe in support of the antichristian hierarchy.

This short-lived intermediate power might on some accounts be considered as the "seventh" head of the beast, and as such be distinguished from its last head, which in this view would be the "eighth:" but upon the whole it was rather to be considered as belonging to that in which it merged, and which in this view would be the seventh, or "of the seven."

There is an apparent difficulty in this *last head* of the Roman government being described as *the beast that was and is not*, as though the charges here alluded to were peculiar to that last head, when in fact they respect the beast under different heads. The

answer I conceive to be this—The beast it is true *was* under his first five heads, and *was not* under his sixth ; but till the last stages of his existence this description could not be applied to him, or become as it were *his proper name*. From thence he would be known as *the beast that was and is not*, or as the no longer pagan, but Christian empire.

12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet ; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.* 13 *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.* 14 *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings : and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* 15 *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.* 16 *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* 17 *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* 18 *And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

In every description of the Roman beast, whether by Daniel or John, the ten horns are a distinguished part of it. " Ten kings," in the language of prophecy, are ten kingdoms, or governments. They were not kingdoms at the time of the vision : hence the kings are said to have " received no kingdom as yet ;" but on the overturning of the empire by the Goths in the fifth century, those nations which had before been dependent provinces, together with others that were without its jurisdiction, became independent kingdoms ; and having embraced the religion of Rome, in process of time united in supporting it.

The reign of these kings is said to be " one (or *the same*) hour with the beast ;" that is, with the last head of the Roman empire. They had overturned the empire in its preceding head or form ; but by agreeing together in religion they established it under a new form : and being of the same mind with the beast in this his new form *as to supporting the church*, they unanimously " gave

their power and strength and kingdoms to him," for this end. They did not subject their kingdoms to him as a secular power, for then had they not been independent ; their only connexion with him would be ecclesiastical, or in his supporting the harlot. That this was the only bond of union between them is manifest from the result of things : when their love should be turned into hatred, they are not said to hate the beast, but the whore ; it was the whore therefore, and not the beast, that was the object of their attachment. While he, caparisoned in scarlet, should carry her through all her filthy and bloody courses, they would be with him, holding up his trappings, or lending their authority to enforce his measures.

Such was actually the conduct of all the governments of Christendom prior to the Reformation, and such has been the conduct of many of them since. It is thus that they are said to have made "war with the Lamb." Their proceedings with respect to religion have been antichristian. All that has been done for more than a thousand years in invading the rights of conscience has been assuming his throne ; and all the cruel edicts against what they call heresy and heretics, with all the bloody executions of them, have been in direct hostility against his kingdom. But the Lamb shall overcome them." Whosoever shall gather together against him will fall for his sake. They may ask, who is like unto the beast, and who is able to make war with him ? But the Lamb is "Lord of lords, and King of kings," and must prevail. His army, too, is a select band, "called, and chosen, and faithful," who following their leader are certain to be victorious. The overthrow of the governments of Christendom does not respect them as *monarchical* in distinction from republican, (for one of Daniel's "kingdoms" was a republic,) but as *antichristian.* Those governments that "make war with the Lamb," whatever be their form, the "Lamb will overcome them.

In the progress of this war it is intimated that the kings who have supported the harlot shall have their hearts turned to "hate" her, and so shall be instruments in her destruction. The hierarchy will become as odious in the eyes of the nations as a wrinkled prostitute is in the eyes of her paramours. This is the way in which

the antichristian church is doomed to fall. It will not be from the increase of religious people who withdraw from her communion, as she has always apprehended; but from those who have been her companions in sin, and who, when nothing more is to be expected from her, shall turn against her and destroy her. It is not by Protestantism, nor by Methodism, (as serious Christianity is now called amongst us,) but by Infidelity, that false religion will be overthrown.

It may seem strange that the powers which supported the antichristian harlot should be the instruments employed in destroying her; but so it is appointed of heaven. God, who saw the end from the beginning, intended for wise ends to permit the apostasy, and so to order it that the governments of Europe should for a time unite in supporting it. But it is only for a time: when the purposes and prophecies of God are fulfilled, he will cause a spirit of discord to separate these workers of iniquity, so that they shall destroy one another.

Finally, That no doubt might be left as to what was signified by the woman, she is called "that great city which reigned" at the time of the vision, "over the kings," or kingdoms "of the earth." This was equal to saying, It is ROME, considered as the seat of an antichristian hierarchy, which in the latter part of her empire shall prevail, but which, like all her other forms, shall go into perdition.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

THE FALL OF BABYLON, AND THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

Chap. xviii. xix. 1—10.

And after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* 3 *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.* 4 *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* 5 *For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.* 6 *Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.* 7 *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* 8 *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.* 9 *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,* 10 *Standing afar off for the fear of*

her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 *And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:* 12 *The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,* 13 *And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.* 14 *And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.* 15 *The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,* 16 *And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!* 17 *For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,* 18 *And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!* 19 *And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.* 20 *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.* 21 *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.* 22 *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;* 23 *And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.* 24 *And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

This is another note of illustration; a sacred ode much resembling that on the fall of old Babylon.* That which old Babylon was to Zion, the Roman hierarchy has been the Christian church and the end of the one shall correspond with that of the other.

Her fall being *sudden*, and accomplished by the "strong arm of him that judgeth her," seems to relate to her *political* overthrow, as predicted by "the harvest and the vintage," Chap. xiv.; by the "battle of Armageddon," Chap. xvi.; and by "the supper of the great God," Chap. xix. And as the city to be destroyed does not consist of material buildings, but is a community extending over many nations; so the fire by which it is consumed will doubtless be such as is suited to the object. The events of *war* may be that to the antichristian cause which fire is to a city.

I shall barely *notice the contents* of the song, and *remark on a few of its parts.* An angel descends from heaven and proclaims the important event; and while he pronounces the doom of the criminal, states withal what have been her crimes. Ver. 1—3. Another voice is heard from heaven, addressed to the people of God who have in different ways and degrees been connected with her, to come out of her as Lot escaped from Sodom, lest being partakers of her sins, they receive also of her plagues. Ver. 4. This second voice also confirms the charges exhibited against her by the first; and reiterates her doom. Ver. 5—8. A description is given of her overthrow under the image of a city on fire. Ver. 9—13. Those who have been seduced by her wiles shall be filled with astonishment at beholding her fearful end. Ver. 9—13. The criminal herself is tauntingly addressed, as having lost all that her heart had been set upon. Ver. 14. Interested men make great lamentations on account of her. Ver. 15—19. Apostles, prophets, and martyrs are called upon to rejoice over her. Ver. 20. Her fall is compared to the sinking of a great millstone cast into the sea. Ver. 21. Her desolations are described by the loss of all her enjoyments. Ver. 22—24. Great interest is excited in heaven by her overthrow. Chap. xix. 1—6. A general joy pervades the church of God both in heaven and earth, and the

* Isa. xiv 4—23. xx. 9.

Millennium quickly follows. Ver. 7—9. The song concludes with an account of the effect of the vision on the apostle towards his informant. Ver. 10.

By the language in Chap. xviii. 6, 7. it may seem as if the servants of God would be the executioners of his wrath upon this corrupt community: but their being called to "reward her as she rewarded them" may only denote that the judgments inflicted upon her will be according to their testimony, and in answer to their prayers. It was thus that the two witnesses inflicted plagues upon their enemies. Chap. xi. 5, 6. The visible agents employed in the work will be the governments of Christendom which will "hate the whore, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

That which will greatly contribute to the fearfulness of her overthrow will be her *previous security*. She saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." If she had been "the bride, the Lamb's wife," she could not have been more secure; so much the greater therefore will be her fall.

The events which to a political eye seem to occur only from the chances of war, are here described as the process of the *Judge* of heaven and earth. The power which will be exerted will be that of a judge over a condemned malefactor, at whose command the officers of justice proceed to execution. Power is the only thing that she has respected; and by the strong arm of power she shall be brought down! Ver. 8.

We have heard of the hearts of the kings being turned to hate the whore; yet we find here kings *lamenting her overthrow*. The kings or kingdoms of Europe may then be what they now are, divided into parties. One party, and that the successful, will from interested considerations hate and set themselves against her; another party, from similar considerations, will espouse her cause; and these, proving unsuccessful, will lament over her. Ver. 10.

The kings are joined in their lamentations by the "merchants," and who seem to be those who have made a trade of religion; which, however it may include many amongst the laity, must refer more immediately to the mercenary part of the clergy.

The most notable article in the list of her commodities is "the souls of men." There is doubtless an allusion to Ezek. xxvii. 13.; but "the persons of men" can there mean only slaves; whereas "the souls of men" are here distinguished from slaves. Tyre dealt only in men's bodies, but Rome in their souls. I know not what else to make of the sale of indulgencies and pardons; of the buying and selling of church livings; of confessions, prayers for the dead, and of every other mean of extorting money from the ignorant.

That which will excite the most doleful lamentations among the adherents of the antichristian church will cause the friends of Christ to shout for joy. The marks of desolation are recounted with triumph. The sounds of music, the bustle of craftsmen, the grinding of the millstone, the light of a candle, and the joyful salutations of the bridegroom and the bride, are all ceased, and succeeded by the awful stillness of death. And if any ask, Wherefore hath the Lord done this? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? the answer is, "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

The first ten verses of the nineteenth chapter, which are a part of the sacred ode, describe the effect of the fall of Babylon on the friends of God both in heaven and earth.

1 *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:* 2 *For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.* 3 *And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.* 4 *And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.* 5 *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.* 6 *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* 7 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and*

his wife hath made herself ready. 8 *And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

The heavenly host with one voice raises the shout of "ALLELUIA! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said ALLELUIA! and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." What a contrast between this and the whining lamentations of the merchants!

The punishment of every community *as such* requires to be in this world: when therefore her smoke is said to "rise up for ever and ever," the allusion may be to a city consumed by fire; and the meaning is, that it shall never be rebuilt, but its overthrow like that of Sodom, shall be set forth for an everlasting monument of the divine displeasure.

After this a voice is heard out of the throne, saying, "Praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him both small and great." The theme is acceptable to him that sitteth upon the throne, and must be encored. In answer to this call of the angel, the servants of God both in heaven and earth are described as in a state of delightful agitation. With one voice they renew the song, and expatiate on the subject. The sound of their voices is as that of an immense multitude of people, or as the roaring of the sea, or as continued peals of thunder, saying "ALLELUIA; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" God had always been omnipotent, and had always reigned; but while his enemies were suffered to prevail on earth he did not *appear* to reign in that part of his empire as he now will. Now his right hand and his holy arm will have gotten him the victory!

But the song is not yet finished: it is added, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The Lamb and his wife are fitly introduced in opposition to the harlot and her paramours; namely, the beast and the kings of the earth. The fall of the one is the signal for the glorious appearance of the

other. Such was the taking away of the dominion of the *little horn* to the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven being given to the people of the saints of the most High. (Dan. vii. 26, 27.) This marriage of the Lamb I conceive is the Millennium itself. Both this and the fall of Babylon, which precedes it, are here introduced by way of anticipation. They each come into the song of heaven previously to their being actually accomplished on earth. The account of the one follows in the remainder of this chapter, where the beast and the false prophet are taken; and that of the other in the first six verses of the chapter following.

The accession of believers to Christ at any period is represented by the espousal of a chaste virgin to her husband; and the whole gospel dispensation is described as a marriage supper. What an espousal then, and what a supper will that be, when Jews and Gentiles, from every nation under heaven, shall be brought to believe in him! The appearance of the Christian church has not been such of late ages as might have been expected of one that had Christ for her head. She has been not only scattered by persecution, but her beauty greatly tarnished by errors, corruptions, and divisions, so as scarcely to sustain a *visible* character: but when believers all over the world shall have purified their souls by obeying the truth; when they are what they were in the days of pentecost, "of one heart and of one soul;" and when there is nothing but distance of situation to hinder their being united in one body; then will "the bride have made herself ready."

The church is described as being *active* in putting on her robes of glory, but they are ready *prepared* for her. To her was "*granted* that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." Reference may be had to the wedding garments provided according to the representation in the parable, at the expense of the bridegroom. It is said to be "the righteousness of the saints;" yet as it respects the saints, not individually but collectively: and at the Millennial period, it would seem to denote a *justification* of the church from all things which have stood against her, analogous to that of an individual believer on his first espousal

to Christ. As the perdition of the antichristian community is described in language alluding to that of individual unbelievers, (Ver. 3, 20.) so that the glory bestowed on the church at this period alludes to that which is conferred on individual believers when they are "washed, and justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Thus the church in the days of Zerubbabel, when she had been polluted among the heathen, is represented by Joshua the high priest, "clothed with filthy garments," and her justification by the "taking away of his filthy garments and clothing him with change of raiment." Thus also the glory of the church at another period is expressed in language applicable at all times to individual believers—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth with jewels." (Isa. lxi. 10.) Christ's salvation will then be to her as a beautiful garment, and his righteousness as an ornamental robe.

9 *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

A blessing was pronounced by our Lord on those who saw and heard the things which were then to be seen and heard, and a still greater blessing is in reserve for those who shall see and partake of the good here predicted. The most glorious things spoken of the church of God will then be accomplished. The success of the gospel in different parts of the world during the period of the vials will then meet as a confluence of rivers near the ocean. The tides of mercy and judgment towards Jews and Gentiles will now find their level in the salvation of both. "In times past we believed not God, but obtained mercy through their unbelief:" now "through our mercy they also shall have obtained mercy." Rom. xi. 30, 31. In former ages God blessed the eastern parts of the world; of late ages the western; but now the kingdom of Christ, like a returning tide, shall spread over both west and east. Isa. lx. 1—11. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days!" Dan. xii. 12.

These predictions respecting the overthrow of Babylon, and the establishment of the church are attested by the angel as "the true sayings of God." Such an attestation would tend to strengthen the faith and hope of believers, who might otherwise during the long reign of the antichristian beasts be tempted to think that God had forgotten to be gracious, and would be favourable to his church no more.

Here I consider the sacred ode on the fall of Babylon and the marriage of the Lamb as closing, with only a few words of the apostle concerning his informant.

10 *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

The angel here spoken of seems to be him whose voice was heard out of the throne, calling for a repetition of the song. Ver. 5. John probably supposed him to be the Son of God himself, who had more than once in his visions appeared as an angel, and whom he was in the habit of worshipping. But the angel refuses his adoration on the ground of his being merely a servant, the fellow-servant of him and of his brethern, who had the testimony of Jesus. *They* testified of things concerning him which were accomplished; as of his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and the way of salvation by him: *he* revealed prophecies which as yet were unaccomplished. Yet their work was much the same: the theme of their testimony contained the spirit or substance of what he had imparted by prophecy. They were therefore fellow-labourers in the same cause, and must not worship one another, but God. Christ himself is not an object of worship considered as man, but as God only. That he is God as well as man, and as such an object of divine worship, this circumstance of the angel's refusal fully evinces. We see in his conduct what we see in that of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium; and every creature who fears God must follow the example. If Jesus therefore were not God, he ought on all occasions to have refused divine worship, and certainly would have done so. His never having done this is sufficient proof of his divinity. Nor can it be justly alleged that the worship paid

to Christ was mere civil respect; for then the same might be said of John's worshipping the angel, and which he might have done without being repulsed. We learn therefore from this circumstance that Jesus is not only the theme of the gospel ministry, and the spirit or substance of prophecy; but that he is truly and properly divine.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

THE TAKING OF THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET.

Chap. xix. 11—21.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself:* 13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God.* 14 *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* 15 *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* 16 *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.* 17 *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;* 18 *That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.* 19 *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and*

against his army. 20 *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.* 21 *And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

When the Israelites, full of fearful apprehension from the pursuit of their enemies, cried out for fear, Moses said unto them, "Fear not: stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever!" In going over these last ten chapters, we have seen and heard much of the beast, and the false prophet, and of the mischiefs which they have wrought upon the earth: but this is the last account that we shall have of them. By the prophecies in these verses they are buried in oblivion, so that the church in after times shall know of them only as we know of Pharaoh and his host, namely, as matters of history.

In cases wherein the parties have been assured of victory, it has not been unusual for a battle to be preceded by a song of triumph. It was thus when Jehoshaphat went forth against his enemies: singers were first appointed to praise the Lord, and then the army was led on to the engagement.* And thus our Lord, when about to engage the powers of darkness, being certain of victory, exclaimed, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out!—Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him!"† It is thus, I conceive, that the prophecy, having anticipated the victory over Babylon in a song of triumph, proceeds to describe the battle. The scene of the song was in heaven; but the battle in which the event will actually occur is upon earth. It is the same as that before described under the sixth vial, namely, the battle of Armageddon; "the great day of God Almighty,"—"the supper of the great God!"

Observe the preparations for it.—"Heaven is opened, a white horse is seen, and he that sat upon it is called Faithful and True,

* 2 Chron. xx. † John xii. 31. xiii. 31.

who in righteousness doth judge and make war." We can be at no loss in deciding who this great warrior is. He is doubtless the same that is addressed in Psa. xlv. 3, 4. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things."—I may add, he is the same that is described in the first six verses of the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah; and what is here predicted by John not only alludes to that prophecy, but appears to refer to the same event. His coming up from Edom with garments stained with the blood of his enemies, appears to be justly paraphrased by Dr. Watts:

"I lift my banner, saith the Lord.
Where antichrist has stood;
The city of my gospel-foes
Shall be a field of blood.

My heart hath studied just revenge,
And now the day appears;
The day of my redeem'd is come,
To wipe away their tears.

Slaughter, and my devouring sword,
Shall walk the streets around;
Babel shall reel beneath the stroke,
And stagger to the ground."

It may be thought that this *bloody* representation is unsuitable to the character of the *Prince of Peace;* and that the battle between him and his army on the one side, and that of the beast and kings on the other, is contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation. To solve this difficulty, let it be observed, that the war here described is of *two kinds*, and Christ sustains a two-fold character in conducting it. The first is *spiritual;* and this he undertakes as the "head of the church." In this character he rides upon a *white* horse, and the armies of heaven follow him upon *white* horses; fitly representing the great efforts that shall be making at the very period of Babylon's overthrow, to spread the gospel over the whole earth. The second is *providential;* and

this he undertakes as "head over all things to the church." In this character, he is "clothed with a vesture dipt in *blood*." In making war in his *spiritual* character, he does not wait to be attacked by his enemies: he goes forth in this respect conquering and to conquer. But in so far as the war is of a *providential* character, the enemies are the aggressors. The beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, "gather together to make war against him and his army." Ver. 19. The idea conveyed by this language is, that while he who sitteth upon the white horse, and his army are going forth to spread the everlasting gospel in the world, the beast and his allies will gather together to oppose its progress, and will perish in the attempt.

There is no necessity for supposing the armies of Christ will have literally to fight with those of the beast and the kings: but while they are following him in spreading the gospel, *He*, as King of kings and Lord and lords," may work the utter overthrow of their adversaries, by setting them at variance *with one another*. We have seen this accomplished in part already, in the antipathies and wars which have raged between Infidelity and Popery; and such may be the progress of things, till, like two furious beasts of prey, they shall both be destroyed. The account itself agrees with this supposition: for though the armies of the beast are said to have gathered together against *the armies* of him that sat upon the horse, yet there is no mention of any being engaged in their overthrow but *he himself*. It is *he* that "smites the nations," "treads the wine-press," and has his "vesture dipt in blood." It is remarkable, too, that in the corresponding prophecy of Isa. lxiii. 1—5, he is said to have "trodden the wine-press ALONE, and of the people, THERE WAS NONE WITH HIM."

These remarks may suffice for the general meaning of the prophecy. Let us now attend to a few of the particulars.

It is a joyful sight to see the Son of God riding forth upon the white horse. He will not wait for the fall of the antichristian powers ere he extends his spiritual kingdom. The flight of the evangelical angel was prior to the fall of Babylon; such is still the order of things; and it is in opposing this great and good work

that the enemies of the gospel will bring destruction upon themselves.

The character given to this divine warrior must not be overlooked. He is "faithful and true," as performing all his engagements to God, and fulfilling all his promises to men. "In righteousness he doth judge and make war." The cause in which he is engaged is just, and all his measures are in harmony with it. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," burning with holy indignation against his enemies. "And on his head were many crowns," denoting his great power, and numerous conquests. "And he had a name written that no man knew but he himself;" for after all that is known of the glory of his character it passeth knowledge. The "vesture dipt in blood" refers to what has been said of the destruction of his enemies by means of wars kindled by their own malignity. "His name is called the Word of God," as being that divine person whose office it is to reveal the mind of God to men, and whose victories are accomplished by means of the gospel. "The armies of heaven on white horses" are the friends of Christ, who go forth in their respective stations, and lay themselves out to promote his kingdom. "The sharp sword that goeth out of his mouth," is his truth, which is not only the means of saving believers, but of punishing unbelievers. By his word they shall be judged at the last day, and his threatenings will fall upon them even in the present world. Those who are not destroyed by his judgments on the antichristian party, will be despoiled of their power, and ruled as with a rod of iron. "And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"—The vine of the earth being ripe for destruction, like grapes cast into a press, he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." In this there is something especially appropriate, as it respects those kings who have opposed his gospel, and lorded it over the consciences of his subjects. He has long sustained this name in right, but henceforward he will sustain it in fact.

And now comes on the decisive battle, *the battle of Armageddon, the great day of God Almighty, the supper of the great God!*

Terrible things in righteousness have occurred in our times ; but by the strong language used to express this event it seems as if it would surpass every thing which has gone before it. It is unlikely that it should consist of a single battle, but rather of a war, or succession of battles, though doubtless one must be the last. It is proclaimed by an " angel standing in the sun," whose voice would of course be heard from the rising to the going down thereof. The mode in which he announces it is by an invitation to the fowls of heaven to come as to a supper, to feast upon the carcases of all ranks and degrees of men who shall be found on the antichristian side. The beast, and the kings of the earth who make common cause with him, being gathered together with their armies to make war against him that sitteth upon the horse, and against his army, will now be utterly overthrown. Those powers which shall be found supporting the papal hierarchy, together with " the false prophet," or the hierarchy itself, after a corrupt and bloody reign of 1260 years, will be " taken and cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone."

It was remarked on Chapter xvii. 7. that the corruption of the church is ascribed to her alliance with the secular beast ; and it is no less remarkable that the overthrow of the secular beast is ascribed to its alliance with the church. It was " because of the great words that the *little horn* spake against the Most High, that the beast on whose head it grew should be slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Dan. vii. 11. Let governments consider this, and tremble at such alliances.

It is true that neither political nor ecclesiastical bodies, as such, can be literally cast into a place of torment, as individual unbelievers that compose them will be : they may however be cast into perdition so as never to rise any more, which may be the whole of what is intended. As the Christian church in her Millennial glory is described in language applicable to individual believers, (Ver. 8.) so the antichristian church is represented as a hardened sinner, arrested in a course of wickedness, and sent to his own place.

Finally, It is supposed that after this terrible overthrow there will be a remnant, like the scattered remains of a defeated army,

who shall still be on the side of antichrist : but they shall be "slain by the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." As the battle above described is the same as that of Armageddon under the sixth vial, so "the sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth" corresponds with the spiritual judgments under the seventh vial. They who have escaped the temporal calamities of the former, will, except they repent, fall under the spiritual judgments of the latter. The threatenings of Christ's word will overtake them. Their hearts will fail within them, as did the heart of Nabal when told of the words of David. Like him they will be smitten of God and die ; and having no successors to stand up in their place, their cause will die with them.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

ON THE MILLENNIUM.

Chap. xx. 1—6.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,* 3 *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

We have seen the taking of the beast and the false prophet, and in that the fall of Babylon: but the principal mover in the confederacy is *the dragon*, and of him no mention was made in the battle before described. From hence, though he had not been expressly called "that old serpent the Devil and Satan," we might have presumed that he was not of an order of beings to be crushed by the hand of man. His being in one place described as "a great *red* dragon" with the *seven heads and ten horns* of the Roman beast, (Chap. xii. 3.) can therefore only respect the form under which he at that time acted out his mischievous designs.

This great red dragon that had formerly been cast out of heaven is supposed to be yet on earth; and after the taking of his agents, the beast and the false prophet, is about to rally his scattered forces, and to engage in new schemes against the Lord and

against his Christ. If he be not bound, all the success against the other will signify but little ; for he will not be at a loss how to deceive the world, and to engage them anew in some antichristian enterprise.

But who is able to bind him ? The hand of man cannot take him. Lo, " an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and lays hold on him and binds him a thousand years'" The apprehension and imprisonment of this enemy will complete the victory.

There can be no doubt who this angel is, for we know who hath the " keys of hell and of death." To him it appertaineth, after having been manifested to destroy his works, to arrest him in his course, and to set bounds to his operations. The hand of man could not take him ; but the hand of Christ can lay fast hold of him. The dragon being cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal set upon him to prevent his deceiving the nations for a thousand years, the kingdom of Christ shall now be established over the whole earth.

Various questions have arisen concerning this Millennial state, both as to its nature and duration. With respect to the latter the " thousand years" require, I think, in this instance to be taken literally ; for if understood of so many years as there are *days* in this period, the duration of the world would greatly exceed what we are elsewhere given to expect. The apostles seem to have considered themselves as having passed the meridian of time, and as drawing on towards the close of it. Such appears to be the import of the following passages :—God hath in these *last days* spoken to us by his Son.—But now once *in the end of the world* hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice himself—" The *end of all things is at hand*—The coming of the Lord *draweth nigh*—Behold, the judge *standeth before the door*—He that testifieth these things saith, Surely *I come quickly !*" Heb. i. 1. ix. 26. 1 Pet. iv. 7. James v. 8, 9. Rev. xxii. 20. But if the thousand years were reckoned a day for a year, we are at present but upon the threshold of time : the last judgment must in this case be at a distance of hundreds of thousands of years.

A question of more importance is that which respects the *nature* of this Millennial reign of Christ, whether it be *spiritual* or *personal.** Those who favour the first, consider it as a time in which the gospel will be spread over the whole earth, and cordially embraced both by Jews and Gentiles; when those prophecies will be fulfilled which speak of the cessation of wars; of the stone cut out without hands becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth; of the little leaven leavening *the whole lump;* of the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea; of the first dominion coming to Zion; and of the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, being given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

Those, on the other hand, who plead for a *personal* reign of Christ upon earth, consider the Millennium as a state of *immortality*, a state subsequent to the general conflagration, wherein the righteous, being raised from their graves, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; after which the wicked dead being raised, the general judgment shall follow.

Whatever respect I feel for some who have maintained the latter hypothesis, I find insurmountable objections to the hypothesis itself.

First, The idea of a personal reign appears to me nearly to *exclude that of a spiritual one, by leaving little or no place for it.* It is clear that the pouring out of the seven vials is principally for the purpose of destroying the antichristian system, and that when this is accomplished, the Millennium follows. No sooner are the beast and the false prophet taken under the sixth vial, and the world (like the temple after being polluted by Antiochus) purified from its abominations by the seventh, than the dragon is bound

* I say nothing of a third class, which might be denominated *political*, and which in the delirium that prevailed a few years since, made the *dragon* to be "monarchy in general," the *Millennial thrones* (Chap. xx. 4.) seats of magisterial authority to which *the people* were exalted, and *the new heavens and the new earth* the results of the American and French Revolutions! Such are the effects of interpreting prophecy with the view of establishing a political hypothesis.

for a thousand years. If then this thousand years reign be personal, the second coming of Christ must immediately succeed the ruin of antichrist. But if so, how, or when are all those prophecies to be fulfilled which describe the prosperity of the church in the latter days? How are wars to cease in the earth, and peace succeed to it, when as soon as the troubles of the earth are destroyed, the world will be at an end? On this principle antichrist will reign till the heavens are no more. The end of the 1260 years will be the end of time, and the church will have no existence upon the present earth but "in the wilderness." Instead of the stone, after breaking in pieces the image, "becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth," no sooner is the image broken to pieces, than the earth itself shall be burnt up. And on the destruction of the little horn, (Dan. vii. 26, 27.) instead of "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven being given to the people of the saints of the Most High," no sooner shall that horn be broken than the whole earth will be destroyed with it!

Secondly, The idea of a personal reign represents Christ's second coming at a thousand years distance from the last judgment; whereas the scripture speaks of the one as *immediately following the other, and as being the grand object of it.* "The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;* WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, *and to be admired in all them that believe* IN THAT DAY." 2 Thes. i. 7—10. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints *to execute judgment upon all*, &c." Jude 14. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing and kingdom.*" 2 Tim. iv. 1.

Thirdly, The idea of a personal reign represents believers as raised to a state of immortality a thousand years before the close of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; whereas the scripture represents the one as immediately succeeding the other. Speaking of the

resurrection, the apostle says "Christ the first fruits, and afterwards they that are Christ's *at his coming*. THEN *cometh the end* when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 23—28. Now the resurrection of the saints will itself be the resurrection of death. If therefore the end *then* cometh, there is no place for a personal reign of a thousand years between them. Besides, if death be the *last* enemy, and this enemy be destroyed in the resurrection, how can there be a Gog and Magog army to be destroyed a thousand years after it?

Fourthly, Those who consider the Millennial reign as personal, *confine the last resurrection and the final judgment, as described in the latter part of the chapter, to the wicked:* but there is nothing in that account of the resurrection which requires it to be limited to them. The sea is said to give up *the dead* which were in it; and death and hell (or the grave) to give up *the dead* which were in them; which language equally applies to the righteous and the wicked: and as to the last judgment, which immediately follows, had it been confined to the wicked, it would not have been said, "*Whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," since on this principle they could *one of them* be found written in it.

If the last judgment, as described in Chap. xx. 11—15., do not include that of the righteous as well as the wicked, there is no proof from this account of their being judged at all. The scriptures, however, are very express, that "we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give account of the deeds done in the body;" and that "God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Fifthly, The account of Satan's being loosed after a thousand years' restraint, and going forth to deceive the nations, and to gather together the armies of Gog and Magog, *does not comport with a state of immortality, or with the condition of men after their resurrection.* Wicked men may rise, indeed, with the same

enmity against God and religion as they possessed at death : but as to their being able to collect together, and to encompass the church of God in hope of destroying it, the idea is gross and inadmissible. The sea and the grave will give up their dead, not to become followers of Satan in a new enterprise, but to be judged every man according to his work. Ver. 13.

Finally, To represent the Millennium, which precedes the last judgment, as a state of immortality, is to confound it with the New Jerusalem which follows it. The latter is indeed a state of immortality : for "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away :"* but this language itself implies that till after the final judgment it shall not be so.

For these reasons, as well as from the figurative language of almost the whole of the prophecy, I cannot think that the Millennium is to be understood of a personal reign of Christ, in a state of immortality ; but of that glorious *rest* which the church will enjoy after the destruction of her antichristian enemies. Under this view, therefore, I shall now attend to the description given of it.

4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* 5 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* 6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

These thrones correspond with the account in Dan. vii. where after the power of the little horn is broken, it follows, "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Stations of importance both in the world and in the church, will be filled by righteous men. Righteousness therefore

* Chap. xxi. 4.

will flow as a river, and corruption and violence will recede before it. The public mind will favour this course of things. Thus it is that wars and oppressions, and all other disorders, will in a great measure subside. Every thing being done on Christian principles, Christ will reign. "God's way will be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. The people shall be glad and sing for joy, for the Lord will judge them righteously." Psalm lxvii.

The "judgment given unto them, and to the souls that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," denotes that God will now vindicate their character, and avenge their wrongs. This appears to be the meaning in Chap. xi. 18. and xviii. 20. The vengeance poured upon the antichristian party is in the first of these passages called *judging the dead*, because it vindicates them and the cause in which they suffered, and avenges them on their adversaries. Thus it will be during the Millennium. The cause in which the martyrs have suffered will then triumph : and while the names of their persecutors will rot in execration, their labours will be in request, and their characters embalmed in the memory of mankind. It is thus, I conceive, that the martyrs will "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."

The antichristian party, on the other hand called "the rest of the dead," or the "remnant" that escaped from the battle in which "the beast and the false prophet were taken, were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." In other words, they will become as dead men during the whole of the Millennial period. They would die *as a body* in that that they had no successors to stand up in their place, and *as individuals*, if any remained, would be unable to impede the progress of the gospel. After this, their leader being let loose, and permitted to make one more desperate effort, they will then "live again" though it will be but for a short season.

"This (adds the sacred writer) is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Those who consider the reign of Christ personal, understand this

of the resurrection of the bodies of the righteous which they suppose will be a thousand years before that of the wicked. A "*first* resurrection" doubtless implies a second, as much as a "second death" implies a first: but as the first and second deaths are different in their nature, so may be the first and second resurrections. I question if there be any proof of the corporeal resurrection of the righteous being prior in order of time to that of the wicked. The only passage that I recollect to have seen alleged for it, is, 1 Thes. iv. 16. "And the dead in Christ shall rise *first*." It is not, however, in respect of the resurrection of the wicked that they are said to rise *first*, but of the change of the living saints: for it follows, "*Then* we who are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, &c." The context says nothing of the wicked, or of their resurrection. The resurrection of the righteous being mentioned *alone*, or without that of the wicked, does not prove that the one will be prior to the other. If it proves any thing concerning the wicked, it would seem to be that there will be no resurrection of them: but knowing from other scriptures that there will be a resurrection, "both of the just and the unjust," we do not draw this inference; nor have we any ground for drawing the other.

The "first resurrection" appears to me to be no other than *the Millennium itself*, to which all that is said of it will apply. During this glorious period, the church will have its Pauls and Peters and Johns over again. Men will be raised up who will go forth in the spirit and power of those worthies, as much as John the Baptist did in the spirit and power of Elias. Thus the apostles and martyrs will, as it were, be raised from their graves, and live again upon the earth.

The *blessedness* pronounced upon him that hath a part in it, is expressive of the happiness of those times. The idea is the same as that in Chap. xix. 9. "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb:"—and that in Dan. xii. 12. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days!" Each of these passages refers to the same period. If a blessing was pronounced on those who saw the early part of gospel times, much more on those who shall enjoy the latter. It were not enough however to *exist* in those times:

to be blessed we must have "a part" in all that is going on; and in order to this we must be "holy." Otherwise, God might work a work in our days which we should not believe, but despise it, and wonder, and perish!

The *first* resurrection supposes a second, and which seems to be that of the just and the unjust. In this the wicked shall be raised to die a second death; but over the followers of Christ the second death shall have no power. As a pledge of their victory, they are already made priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign in spiritual prosperity from generation to generation, for the space of a thousand years.

DISCOURSE XXIX.

THE FALLING AWAY, THE END OF THE WORLD, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Chap. xx. 7—15.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. 8 *And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

It seems almost incredible, after so long and glorious a season of grace, that Satan should so recover his influence in the world, as that the number of his adherents should become "as the sand of the sea!" Yet thus it is. What is ordinarily called the religion of a people becomes a sort of national habit, to which they are attached from generation to generation. But it is not thus with true religion. There is nothing in it suited to the temper of mind with which men are born into the world. If therefore the Holy Spirit be aggrieved, and withdraw his influence but from one generation, it will be like that which succeeded the times of Joshua, that "knew not the Lord." If in such a state of things Satan be permitted to ply with his temptations, he is certain to be successful.

"The four quarters of the earth" prior to this must have been evangelized by the gospel; but the dragon being let loose deceives them; not by any new superstition, like that of popery; for as

to the beast and the false prophet, they will long since have gone to perdition. It may be by a persecuting infidelity, the spirit inspired by the dragon himself, that this last effort will be made. Having seen so much of Christianity in the world, the hearts of the wicked will rise against it, and be so far "deceived" by the wicked one as to imagine themselves capable of extirpating it from the earth.

The name given to the enemies of Christ is borrowed from the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel, where mention is made of Gog and Magog. It does not appear, however, that the prophecy of Ezekiel and John refer to the same period; but that the language is merely allusive. Ezekiel's Gog and Magog seem to refer to a combination among the nations against the house of Israel, *soon after their restoration to their own land and their conversion to Christ*, and which will be prior to, or at the commencement of, the Millennium: but the Gog and Magog army of John is "after the thousand years are expired." The meaning may be, that like as the nations will combine against restored and converted Israel, so will the whole world of the ungodly combine to exterminate Christianity from the earth: and as the one would issue in the utter overthrow of the assailants, so would the other.

9 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them.* 10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

As there is nothing in the account which intervenes between this and the resurrection of the dead, the "fire that cometh down from God out of heaven" may be no other than the general conflagration itself, spoken of by the apostles Peter and Paul—"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.—The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking ven-

geance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. iii. 10. 2 Thes. i. 8.

And now the grand mover of all the mischief which has taken place in the world, is not merely bound for a season as before, but cast into perdition, where his agents, the beast and the false prophet, are. There is no mention of *their* being "tormented," because they as political bodies were incapable of it; but of *him* it is said he shall be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." Perdition to them will be oblivion; but to him a state of everlasting punishment.

11 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.* 12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* 13 *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* 14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* 15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

A more impressive description of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, is scarcely in the power of language. The words are simple, but the sentiments exceedingly sublime. "The language is so plain, (says Mr. BLACKWELL,) as not to need, and so majestic and grand as to exceed, commentary or paraphrase." But it is not for us to stand admiring the language till we overlook the event itself.

Lo, the dead, both "small and great, stand before God!" young and old, rich and poor, all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. None are so insignificant as to be overlooked; none so mighty as to escape: the governers and the governed, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the oppressor and the oppressed, the preacher and the hearer, all must give an account of themselves to God!

Men, owing to the imperfection of their knowledge, and of their memories, make use of "books:" but God's infinite knowledge requires no such assistance. It is merely in allusion to human proceedings that this is spoken. His memory is itself the book from which he will judge the world.

Believing sinners are justified by grace: but both believers and unbelievers will be judged "according to their works." Those who have sinned without the light of revelation, will be judged by the light of nature. Those who have sinned against revelation will be judged by it, according to the light they had, or might have had. Believers themselves, though not dealt with according to their deserts, (for they will "obtain *mercy* of the Lord in that day!") yet their works will be censured or approved according to what they were. Their sinful works will be burnt up, though they themselves are saved; and as to their good works, though there be nothing in them deserving eternal life, or furnishing the least ground for boasting, yet will they be admitted as evidences in their favour. Matt. xxv. 31—40.

There have been many days of judgment, as it were, in miniature, but this will be universal. Whether men have died at sea, or on land; and whatever became of their bodies, whether slain in battle, devoured by beasts of prey, or decently interred in their graves, all will rise and be judged. Ver. 13.

"Death and hell (or the grave) were cast into the lake of fire." Death and the grave are things which belong to time, and which, as rivers are lost in the ocean, will now be swallowed up in eternity. Prior to the day of judgment the ungodly were confined under their power as in a prison: but having received their doom they shall not be remanded thither, but shall go away into everlasting punishment. "This is the second death." Into this dreadful abyss all will be cast, as the just punishment of their sins, excepting those whose names are "written in the book of life." An interest in the salvation of Christ is the only security against eternal death.

DISCOURSE XXX.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH, WITH THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Chap. xxi. xxii. 1—5.

And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* 3 *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* 4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* 5 *And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.* 6 *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.* 7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* 8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorce-*

rers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. 9 *And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* 10 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,* 11 *Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone, most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal;* 12 *And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.* 13 *On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.* 14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* 15 *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.* 16 *And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.* 17 *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.* 18 *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.* 19 *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald;* 20 *The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.* 21 *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.* 22 *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.* 23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* 24 *And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light*

of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there.* 26 *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.* 27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

We have seen in the foregoing chapter, the end of the world and the last judgment, even that fearful issue of things described by the Apostle Peter: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heart; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.—But as the same Apostle adds, "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for *new heavens*, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" so in this chapter, and the first five verses of the next, we find an ample description of them.

What then are we to understand by this "new heaven and new earth," this "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven," and this "pure river of the water of life," which is supposed to flow in the midst of it? Some have considered it as only a more particular account of the Millennium. But to this it is objected—*First*, The Millennium precedes the last judgment, whereas the new heavens and the earth follow it. *Secondly*, The Millennium was for a limited time, but this is "for ever and ever." Chap. xxii. Ver. 5. *Thirdly*, Under the Millennium the dragon is only bound for a season, and afterwards loosed: but here there is no dragon, nor enemy of any kind. The devil will have been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Chap. xx. 10.); "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Ver. 4.

For these reasons others have considered it as no other than *the heavenly state.** Yet it seems singular that the heavenly

* LOWMAN—HOPKINS on the Millennium, p. 48.

state should be introduced as a subject of *prophecy*.—It is doubtless an object of *promise*, but prophecy seems rather to respect events in the world in which we dwell than in the world to come. Whatever is meant by the glorious state here described, the *earth*, as purified by the conflagration, is the scene of it. The whole of what is said, instead of describing the heaven of heavens, represents the glory of that state as "coming down upon the earth." Ver. 1—4. The truth appears to me to be this: It is a representation of heavenly glory *in so far as that glory relates to the state of the earth on which we dwell;* which instead of being the stew of the mother of harlots, shall become the seat of "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The earth will not be annihilated by fire any more than it was by water. It will be purified from sin, and all its effects. The generations of a corrupt race of creatures having terminated, it will become the perfect and perpetual abode of righteousness. The creation has long been subjected to the "vanity" of supplying its Creator's enemies with the means of carrying on their rebellion against him. Under this "bondage of corruption" it has "groaned and travailed," as it were, in pain, longing to be delivered. And now the period is arrived. The liberation of the sons of God from the power of the grave shall be the signal of deliverance to the whole creation.*

It is not the object of the Holy Spirit to tell us what the heavenly glory is, but rather *what this world shall become, in opposition to what it now is.* This opposition is preserved throughout the description. We have read of Babylon; not that in Chaldea, but a *new* Babylon: here we read of Jerusalem; not that in Palestine, but a *new* Jerusalem—of a city by whose delicacies the merchants of the earth were made rich; now of another city in the light of which "the nations of them that are saved shall walk, and to which kings shall bring their glory and honour" —of a troubled "sea," from whence arose those monsters which were the plagues of the earth; now there being "no more sea"

* Rom. viii. 19—23.

—of the "great whore that sat upon many waters;" now of "the bride the Lamb's wife"—of "great tribulations out of which the saints of God have had to come;" now of "all tears being wiped from their eyes, and of death and sorrow and crying and pain having passed away—finally, of "a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness;" but now of the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," together with the "fruits of the tree of life, which bears twelve kinds of fruit, and yields its fruit every month."

As the new Jerusalem is denominated "the bride, the Lamb's wife," all that is said of her as a *city*, from Ver. 10—27, though couched in highly figurative language, is descriptive of the church triumphant. In this, as in many other places, there is a reference to the prophecies of Ezekiel,* though the events predicted are not always the same. The city in Ezekiel seems to be the church in a day of great spiritual prosperity; this in a state of immortality. Her high wall denotes her complete security; her twelve gates, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, denote that none but Israelites indeed, who have the seal of God in their foreheads, will enter into it; her twelve foundations may refer to the doctrine of the apostles on which she stands; the pearls and precious stones with which she is adorned are her spiritual riches and glory; there being "no temple, nor sun, nor moon, denotes that there will be no need of those means of grace which we now attend upon; what we now receive mediately, we shall then receive immediately; finally, the nations of the saved, walking in the light of it, may allude to the interest which surrounding nations take in a metropolitan city, and denotes that the saved, who have been gathered from all nations, will rejoice in the honour that God will have bestowed upon his church.

To complete the description of the city, and to finish the prophecy, we must consider the first five verses of the twenty-second chapter in connexion with the foregoing.

* Chap. xlviii. 31—34.

1 *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.* 2 *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* 3 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face: and his name shall be in their foreheads.* 5 *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

There is doubtless an allusion in these verses to the waters of the sanctuary, and the trees of life, described in Ezekiel xlvii. 1—12. Both Ezekiel and John make mention of a city—of a river—of trees growing upon the banks of it—and of the fruit thereof being for meat, and the leaf for medicine. Ezekiel's waters flowed from the temple, near the altar; those of John out of the "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The city is doubtless the same in both; but I conceive at different periods. Ezekiel's city had a temple, but that of John, as we have seen, had no temple; for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." The first therefore describes the church in her latter-day glory; the last in a state of perfection—and which answers to the promise in Chap. ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

DISCOURSE XXXI.

ATTESTATIONS TO THE TRUTH OF THE PROPHECY, &c.

Chap. xxii. 6—21.

We have gone through the prophecy: all that remains consists of attestations, directions, invitations, and warnings, concerning it.

6 *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

Such is the solemn attestation of the *angel* to the truth of all that he had made known to the apostle. He had received it from the Son of God, even the Lord God of the holy prophets, who had sent by him to signify it unto his servant John. Chap. i. 1.

7 *Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

After the attestation of the angel, follows that of *him that sent him.* The "coming" of Christ refers to his second appearing. His declaring that this would be "quickly," is declaring that the things which had been foretold should soon be accomplished. Meanwhile they would be a guide to the faithful, and a blessing should attend those who adhered to them.

8 *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the*

angel which showed me these things. 9 *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

This is the attestation of the *writer*. He not only saw and heard these things, but such was their effect on his mind that on one occasion he conceived the angel who revealed them to him to have been the Son of God himself, and therefore fell down to worship him. Some have expressed surprise that the apostle, after the angel had once refused his adoration, should offer it a second time: but it appears to me that what is here related is merely a repetition of what was said and done before. (Chap. xix. 10.) He first tells of his having "seen" the things that were to be seen, and "heard" the things that were to be heard; and now, of his having been so overcome by them, as to suppose the angel from whom they proceeded to be the Son of God, and of course to have fallen down to worship him. The design of the repetition is merely to add weight to the attestation.

10 *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.* 11 *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* 12 *And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* 13 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* 14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* 15 *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* 16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

He who speaketh in these verses is not the angel, but the Son of God himself, whose speech is resumed from verse 7. The eighth and ninth verses are a parenthesis, in which the writer expresses his own feelings. He who in verse 7. said, "Behold I come quickly," here adds, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy

of this book, for the time is at hand." As if he should say, Do not conceal, but declare them, for they are things of immediate concern.—To this is added a solemn declaration of the near approach of that period when the characters of men should be unalterably fixed. Let the persecutors and corrupters of the gospel know, that there is no change but on earth, no Saviour nor Sanctifier beyond the grave. Let the righteous know also, who have faithfully adhered to him through all the temptations and persecutions of the world, that the time draws nigh when their conflicts shall be ended, and they shall be immutably confirmed in righteousness and true holiness. And now the solemn warning of his near approach is repeated, accompanied with a declaration that "his reward is with him, and that he will give every man according as his work shall be."—The character assumed by the Judge, that of "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," while it ascertains his proper divinity, conveys an impressive idea of the proceedings of that day. It is equal to saying, He that shall judge the world will be possessed of a divine as well as of a human nature; and where God is Judge himself, the heavens will declare his righteousness.—Blessed shall they be in that day who have "done his commandments," or who, amidst the temptations and persecutions of the world, have kept his sayings. All the blessedness contained in partaking of "the tree of life," and of the glory of "the new Jerusalem," shall be theirs. On the other hand, "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," are "without." Nor does this description appear to refer to ordinary sinners, of which the world is full, but rather to *the enemies of the gospel, and the corrupters of pure religion.* Thus "dogs" denote false teachers; "sorcerers," those who have been employed in drawing away mankind by the lures of the mother of harlots; "whoremongers," those who have committed spiritual fornication with her, or her daughters; "murderers," those who have entered into her persecuting spirit; "idolaters," those who have gone into the worship of saints, and images; and "he that loveth and maketh a lie," is one whose heart favouring

false doctrine, has employed himself in framing and propagating it. See Chap. xxi. 8.

The Lord Jesus having from the 10th to the 16th verse addressed himself to the apostle, here turns to the churches, assuring them that all which was revealed in the foregoing prophecy was for their use. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Nor was it to those only which were then in being, but to all the churches of succeeding ages. The things contained in this prophecy, therefore, are a message from Christ in his glorified state to us. And as in reference to his second coming he assumed the character of "the first and the last," here he is "the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star:" which names are descriptive of Him who is God in our nature, and whose coming will introduce an everlasting day of light and joy and gladness.

17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* 18 *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things,—God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:* 19 *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* 20 *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.* 21 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Christ does not only assume a name suited to the revelations which had been made, but draws from them the most affecting invitations, and solemn warnings; and with these the book concludes.

'Reader,' as if he should say, 'You have read of *the water of life:* you are invited to "come," and drink freely of it. You have read or heard of *the Spirit* that spake to the churches: he speaks also to you individually, and the sum of what he saith is, "Come." You have heard of the *bride*, and of the glories prepared for her: she does not covet to enjoy these things by her-

self, but joins with the spirit of inspiration in inviting you to "come." Nay, every one that "heareth" and believeth these things is warranted to invite his neighbour. And let every one who has any regard for his own soul, avoid the cup of the mother of harlots, and come to these living waters. There need be no hesitation on the score of qualifications, for it is free to all who are willing to receive it.

'Know also that the words of this prophecy are sacred. If any man add to them, God will add to him its plagues; and if any man take away from them, God will take away from him whatever he may have expected to receive of its blessings. He who testifieth these things saith, the third time, SURELY, I COME QUICKLY!'

To this solemn testimony of Christ the apostle adds his cordial "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" And as he had introduced the prophecy with an address to the seven churches, so he concludes it with the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

CONCLUSION.

The reader may ask, What are the signs of the present times? What judgments may yet be expected to befall the nations? and, What cheering prospects await the church?

If the outlines of the foregoing commentary be just, we are now under *the period of the vials*, or that space of time which commences with the sounding of the seventh angel, and terminates in the Millennium. This is a period which appears to be marked in the prophecy; particularly in Chap. x. 7. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." That is, In the times in which the seven vials shall be poured out, the great designs of heaven concerning the overthrow of the papal antichrist, and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, as foretold by the prophets, shall be accomplished.

This is the period in which, according to Daniel, "The thrones are pitched down, and the Ancient of days doth sit—in which they shall take away the dominion of the little horn, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." We see not yet the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; but we see that which is both preparatory and introductory to it.

Moreover, If the exposition of the vials by the trumpets, adopted from Dr. GILL, be just, we are as yet but under the second vial, which for several years has been pouring out upon the *sea*, or the maritime papal nations of Spain and Portugal ; and notwithstanding what has taken place, it may be suspected that much of it is yet to come.

Much has been written on the commencement and consequent termination of the 1260 years assigned in prophecy for the continuance of the antichristian power. If the former could be ascertained, the latter would follow of course. Some think them to have already terminated, and others that they are on the point of doing so. But of this I think we may be certain, that unless the vials are all poured out, to which few if any will pretend, the reign of the papal antichrist cannot have terminated, seeing they are the appointed means of its destruction. The *finishing of the mystery of God*, (Chap. x. 7.) is the same as the termination of the 1260 years, as is evident from the corresponding passage in Dan. xii. 7. where the angel swears that it shall be for *a time, times, and an half*. The pouring out of the last vial is the termination of the 1260 years : accordingly, a great voice is then heard out of the temple of heaven, saying, IT IS DONE.*

It may be questioned however, whether the precise time of the commencement and termination of this period, be not purposely concealed from us. It does not appear to be the design of prophecy so to fix the time of future events, as that we should know them beforehand, to a day, or a month, or a year. It deserves moreover, to be particularly noticed, *that these prophecies in which an exact number of years is specified, are generally, if not always, covered with obscurity in respect of the time of their accomplishment, and in some cases have appeared to have had different accomplishments.* Seventy years, for instance, were determined for the Babylonish captivity ; but as the captives were carried away and restored at different times, it was hard to say when it began, and consequently when it ended. From the first

* Chap. xvi. 17.

captivity in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and others were carried to Babylon, to the first restoration by the decree of Cyrus, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4108 to 4178.* From the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the reign of Zedekiah to the decree of Darius to restore it, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4126 to 4196.† And from the captivity by Nebuzaradan which finished the desolation, to the dedication of the second temple, which completed the restoration, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4130 to 4200.‡ See the Tables in Prideaux.

Again, Seventy weeks of years were determined for the coming of Messiah; but things were so ordered that though the weeks were well understood to mean 490 years, yet the exact time of their commencement was not understood. A general expectation of him certainly did prevail about the time that he appeared, but that was all that was gathered from the prophecy, and might be all that was intended should be gathered. Those who entertained carnal views of his kingdom, were so blind as not to know it when it did appear. The Pharisees demanded of him, "When the kingdom of God should come?" "The kingdom of God cometh, (answered he,) not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among you!"§ As if he should say, The kingdom of God will not, like the kingdoms of this world, rise out of turbulence, intrigue, and bloodshed, nor be accompanied with ostentation and parade. Imperceptible and gradual in its operations, it comes when you little expect it. You shall not be able to point to the place, and say, Lo, it is here, or lo, it is there! Nay, little as you may think of it, it is already in the midst of you!

In some such manner as this, we may look for the expiration of the years of antichrist, and the coming of the kingdom of Christ in these latter days. While curiosity is gaping after wonders, and demanding, when shall these things be? behold it will be amongst

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—7. 22, 23.
† 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14—21. Ezra vi.
‡ Jer. lii. 30. Ezra vi. 16—22.
§ Luke xvii. 20, 21.

us ! The antichristian cause rose gradually, and will probably fall gradually. " They shall take away his dominion to *consume* and to destroy it unto the end."* Its temporal power has already been shaken and diminished ; but it is reserved for the battle of Armageddon, that " great day of God Almighty," under the sixth vial, to accomplish its overthrow. And when this is done, the seventh will purify the moral atmosphere of the world from its abominable principles, and so make way for the Millennium.

When two of Christ's disciples were inquiring after the *honours* of his kingdom, they were asked, " Are ye able to drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the *baptism* that I am baptized with ?"† He would himself have to suffer before he reigned, and they must expect to suffer with him. It is true his sufferings would be but for a short time, and so might theirs ; but they required to be the immediate object of their attention. Something similar to this may be expected in what is before us. Some commentators have supposed *the slaughter of the witnesses* in Chap. xi. to intimate as much as this. I have already given my reasons for understanding that part of the prophecy of past events : but there are other passages which seem to give us to expect that the adversary will not expire without a deadly struggle. Thus towards the close of the 1260 years, in which the church is described as being in the wilderness, the dragon is represented as casting out of his mouth a " flood" after her, and as making war with her seed.‡ Previous to the harvest and the vintage, which, synchronizing with the sixth vial, describe the utter overthrow of the antichristian powers, the *patience* of the saints is celebrated, and a blessing pronounced on the dead that *die in the Lord*.§ Previous to the battle of Armageddon, the kingdoms are gathered together *to fight against God*.‖ The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to *make war* with him that sat on the horse, and against his army, and perish in an attempt to crush them.¶

* Dan. vii. 26. † Matt. xx. 22. ‡ Chap. xii. 15—17.
§ Chap. xiv. 12, 13. ‖ Chap. xvi. 14. ¶ Chap. xix. 11—21.

If these events signify *war* between the nations, as possibly they may, yet it will be a war directed against Christ and true religion, and in which the church of Christ may expect a sharp persecution ; and this not merely from one, but all parties, who, like Herod and Pilate, will be made friends, and unite in such a work as this. We may think that from the repeated blows which popery has received on the continent, it will never be able to persecute to any considerable degree again ; that from the antipathy between its adherents and the patrons of infidelity they can never again coalesce ; and that from the dishonour which public opinion attaches to intolerance, persecution can never more lift up its head : but we may be mistaken in all these particulars. If the temporal power of popery has diminished on the continent, its spiritual power has increased in Britain.* If papists and the avowed enemies of religion have fallen out, it has been chiefly on political subjects, a union in which would bring them together again. We have lived to see both whigs and tories unite in opposing a free toleration of Christian Missionaries ; and an English writer of note, who professes to be "the enthusiastic friend of freedom," though he wishes the "Catholics the utmost degree of religious liberty," yet proposes in respect of *the evangelical party*, "by well-concerted, and well-applied regulations to *restrain* them!"† The spirit of the beast and the false prophet certainly can, and will unite with that of the dragon in the war with God Almighty.

It is a consolation that this persecution, or this war against religion, will be the last, and of short duration : this very effort of the enemy will prove his final overthrow : our immediate inquiry however, seems to be, Are we able, previous to our entrance on the Millennial reign of Christ, to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism ?

* Recent events have also revived its temporal power. N. E. written in 1814.

† Characters of the late Charles James Fox. By Philopatris Varvicensis. Eclectic Review for December 1809 p. 1128.

But though our Lord checked the aspiring minds of his disciples concerning his kingdom by presenting to them a time of trial, yet he did not fail to cheer them with the promise of glorious things beyond it. "A woman (saith he,) when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."* The glory of the Millennium will more than balance all the trials during the 1260 years of antichristian usurpation. Nor shall we have to wait for the Millennium, nor even for the ruin of the antichristian cause ere we see glorious times. Two hundred years have been thought to be the utmost point to which the pouring out of the vials can extend: they may terminate in less time: but if not, there is great encouragement for the friends of Christ in the promised progress of his cause *during this period.* We shall not have to wait for the Millennium, I say, ere we see glorious days in respect of the success of the gospel. The seventh trumpet, though it includes the vials, and in this view is a woe-trumpet, yet is introductory of good tidings to the church. At the same time that her enemies are bleeding under the strokes of heaven, the "kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." The pouring out of the vials will be to the Millennium that which the wars of David were to the pacific reign of Solomon. The servants of Christ may have to encounter great opposition; but as "the Lord prospered David whithersoever he went," so he will prosper them. Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, and Infidelity, shall fall before them. Nor shall the obstinacy of Judaism maintain its ground. The wall shall be built though it be in troublesome times. What short of this can be intimated by the "Angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"—and *this before the fall of the antichristian Babylon.*†

*John xvi. 21, 22. † Chap. xiv. 6—8.

What else can be meant by the song preceding the pouring out of the vials—"All nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest;"* The judgments referred to are those of the vials, or "seven last plagues" (Chap. xv. 1.); the effect of which on the nations will be to induce them to "come and worship" before God. They shall so "manifestly" appear to be the judgments of God against the antichristian powers, that the nations will be deeply impressed by the conviction; and by the concurring influence of the Holy Spirit and the "everlasting gospel," will be subdued to the obedience of faith.

To the same purpose is that remarkable passage in Isa. xxvi. 9. *When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* "The church under the gospel dispensation, (says an able writer,) is in this and the preceding chapter the *principal* subject of prophecy. Zion is introduced singing. A song is always in the prophecies a symbol of the enlargement of the church. In verses 17, 18, she complains of feeble and ineffectual efforts in extending the interests and kingdom of her Redeemer. *We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.* She receives in answer the consoling promise of a period when she shall make vigorous and successful exertions, and no longer complain of abortive labours; when converts numerous as the morning dew shall join her standard. *Thy dead shall live. Awake and sing—thy dew is as the dew of herbs.* No season or time is particularly ascertained when this promise will be accomplished; but another event is foretold, and immediately connected with this. A judgment, a singular judgment, inflicted as the punishment of a peculiar and enormous crime is mentioned. The event is represented as inevitable; the Lord's people may not pray for its removal, but are directed to fly to their chambers, and hide themselves until the indignation be overpast. *For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain!* The terms here used compared with parallel exertions in the rev-

* Chap. xv. 3, 4.

elation, put it beyond a doubt that the blood of the martyrs is intended, and the punishment predicated is the avenging of that blood. This is introduced as a coetaneous event with the enlargement of the church. Whenever that precious blood begins to be avenged, then Zion will sing of mercy as well as judgment; then a new and prosperous ministry will arise in the church, and her borders be widely extended."*

If the "punishment" referred to at the close of the xxvith chapter of Isaiah be that which is appointed for the antichristian Babylon for her having shed the blood of the martyrs, in which not only this writer, but almost all our ablest commentators are agreed, the ninth verse doubtless refers to the same events. The pouring out of the vials are the "judgments," which while they are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Many judgments have been in the earth without producing this effect; but the Lord will in this instance accompany them with his word and Spirit, and so render them effectual to salvation.

The same things in substance are taught us in Rev. xix. 11—19. where, prior to the last struggle with the beast and the false prophet, Christ is described as "going forth upon a white horse, and as being followed by the armies of heaven on white horses." And when their enemies, provoked by their success, shall gather together in order to oppose their progress, they themselves shall fall to rise no more.

The period of the vials being a season of WARFARE, it is in this, rather than in the Millennium itself, that we are to look for the most distinguished VICTORIES over error, superstition, and irreligion. The Millennium is a *reign*; but a reign presupposes possession of the throne, and that, in cases where it has been previously occupied by an enemy, a *victory*. It is in this period therefore, that we are to look for the overthrow of paganism, Mahomeanism, popery, and infidelity; and towards the close of it may expect the malignant opposition of the Jews to give place to the gospel. The glorious Millennial rest will not commence while

* Dr. LIVINGSTON'S Sermon, from Rev. xiv. 6. before the New-York Missionary Society, on April 3, 1804.

such an enemy remains unsubdued. The marriage-supper of the Lamb must include the children of Abraham in its train. The return of this long-lost prodigal will heighten the joy of the feast, and be as life from the dead.

Supposing the period of the vials to have commenced within the last five and twenty years, let it be considered *whether the aspect of the times does not correspond with what we are given to expect.* It must of necessity be a period of *unprecedented wars*; and if those wars are designed of God to avenge the blood of the martyrs, it may he expected they should have a kind of special direction given them towards the countries where that blood has been principally shed. How far this is applicable to late events, it is easy to judge. It must also be a period of *extraordinary prayer* and *unprecedented exertion for the spread of the gospel.* It is during this period that "the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." But the accomplishment of such mighty moral changes is not to be expected by any other than the means above-mentioned. When the Lord buildeth up Zion, he regards the prayer of the destitute; and when his servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour her dust, then the time to favour her, even the set time, is come.* Had we been more importunate in prayer we might have been more successful; but with all our imperfections, the prayer of faith has been presented and heard! God hath given the word, and, compared with former times, great is the company of those that publish it. Can we overlook that providence which has been raising up numerous societies and plans, some for teaching the poor to read, and others for furnishing them with books, especially with the oracles of God? Ought we to overlook the translation of the scriptures into the various languages of the East; or the circulation of them through the earth in such a degree as perhaps was never before known? Can we be inattentive to the desire after evangelical preaching which prevails, not in one or two countries only, but almost everywhere? If our Lord concluded from the flocking of the Samaritans to hear the word, that "the

* Psa. cii. 14—17.

fields were white already to harvest," are we not warranted to draw the same conclusion ?

Let us observe the state of the public mind a little before the coming of Christ, and compare it with its present state. "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts whether John were the Christ, or not." And who that is not blind to the operations of God's hand does not muse in his heart whether the extraordinary changes which have of late years taken place in the world do not indicate something great to be pending ? Whether, notwithstanding the many venders of false prophecies, and mistaken comments on the true, there be not a body of genuine and important prophecies fulfilling and about to be fulfilled : whether some of the convulsions among the nations may not issue in what is foretold of the restoration of the Jews ; and finally, whether all that is going on be not a preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight his paths ?

Look at the blessing already attending the various attempts to propagate the gospel. To some it may appear a "day of small things :" but if God does not despise it, it will increase. Already have we been provoked to jealousy by Hindoos and Hottentots : nor is this all ; look at our fleets and armies : did we ever before hear of so many lovely groups of Christian people amongst them ? It would seem as if God had begun with these publicans and sinners to shame the rest of the nation.

Finally, If these be not sufficient, look at the state of mind amongst the *enemies* of religion. Do not their hearts fail them, like those of the Canaanites before Joshua and his army ? Why do the brahmans tremble for their gods ? and why are practical unbelievers afraid of godliness, whether in or out of the establishment ? It is pleasant to observe, while endeavouring to stigmatize it under the name of "Methodism," how despondingly they confess their inability to arrest its progress.* Surely these are tokens for good to the church of Christ.

On the period of the vials being closed, that of the Millennium will commence. "The Lord gave Solomon *rest* round about from all his enemies ;" and the Lord will now give rest to his peo-

* See Edinburgh Review, No. XXII. p. 241. Art. Methodism.

ple from theirs. It is probably in allusion to his quiet and pacific reign that that of the Messiah is denominated a *rest—His rest shall be glorious.** Then wars and oppressions will cease. Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold of the image, being broken to pieces, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, the stone that smote it will have become a great mountain, and shall fill the whole earth. Then the judgment having sat upon the little horn, and his dominion being taken away, the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Amen.

Added in 1814.

The above was written in 1810 or 1811, since which time the tide of human affairs has taken another turn. A mighty change has taken place in Europe, in favour of old establishments, and so in favour of popery. We have seen the inquisition, which had been suppressed in Spain, revived; and the pope, whose temporal power had been taken away, restored. But as the foregoing exposition rests not on any hypothesis formed from passing events, so it is not materially affected by them. The direction that things have taken as it relates to the liberation of nations, and their restoration to peace and independence, must needs be grateful to every friend of humanity and justice: and though the papal cause may hereby regain some of its former ascendancy, yet this may be but for a short time, and *that it may be destroyed for ever.* These tides in human affairs may be permitted, as by a flux and reflux of the ocean, to wash away those things which it is the purpose of heaven to destroy. The antichristian power may rise and fall repeatedly, before it falls to rise no more. Irrespective of prophecy, it is easy

* Isa. xi. 10.

for an observant mind to perceive that notwithstanding the political advantages which have arisen from recent changes to most of the papal nations, yet they are not at ease. There remains in them the seeds of discontent and of future wars. Look at the state of Spain, in particular.—Popery must be what it always has been, a persecuting enemy of true religion, or nothing. The preponderating powers of Europe, by restoring its authority, and recommending it to exercise a liberal government, suited to the times, have done all perhaps that was in their power towards lengthening out its tranquillity: but it is in vain. WE WOULD HAVE HEALED BABYLON, they may say, BUT SHE IS NOT HEALED!

END OF VOLUME VI.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LATE REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN BIRMINGHAM;

WITH EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF

HIS MOST INTERESTING LETTERS.

TO THE

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF MR. PEARCE,

THESE MEMOIRS,

COMPILED WITH THEIR APPROBATION

AND FROM A TENDER REGARD TO HIS MEMORY,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY

AND RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED BY

THE COMPILER.

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INTRODUCTION.

It was observed by this excellent man, during his last affliction, that he never till then gained any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. To die by a consumption, had used to be an object of dread to him: But, "Oh my Lord," said he "if by *this death* I can most GLORIFY THEE, I prefer it to all others." The lingering death of the cross, by which our Saviour himself expired, afforded him an opportunity of uttering some of the most affecting sentences which are left on sacred record: and to the lingering death of this his honoured servant, we are indebted for a considerable part of the materials which appear in these Memoirs. Had he been taken away suddenly, there had been no opportunity for him to have expressed his sentiments and feelings in the manner he has now done in letters to his friends. While in health, his hands were full of labour, and consequently his letters were written mostly upon the spur of occasion; and related principally to business or things which would be less interesting to Christians in general. It is true, even in them it was his manner to drop a few sentiments, towards the close, of an experimental kind; and many of these hints will be interspersed in this brief account of him: but it was during his affliction, when, being laid aside nearly a year, and obliged to desist from all public concerns, that he gave scope to the feelings of his heart. Here, standing as on an eminence, he reviewed his life, re-examined the ground of his hope, and anticipated the crown which awaited him, with a joy truly *unspeakable and full of glory.*

Like Elijah, he has left the *chariot of Israel* and ascended as in a *chariot of fire;* but not without having first communicated of his eminently Christian spirit. Oh that a double portion of it may rest upon us!

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LATE MR. SAMUEL PEARCE.

CHAPTER I.

HIS PARENTAGE, CONVERSION, CALL TO THE MINISTRY, AND SETTLEMENT AT BIRMINGHAM.

Mr. Samuel Pearce was born at Plymouth on July 20th, 1766. His father, who survives him, is a respectable silversmith, and has been many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavoured to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age he came home to his father with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he has said, began to ripen; and forming connexions with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart at this time set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable; but at other times they subsided; and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old, he was sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of

a person in the neighbourhood, in dying circumstances, who (though before his departure he was in a happy state of mind, yet) at that time was sinking into deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever!" These awful words pierced his soul; and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord; but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. *Birt*, who was then co-paster with Mr. *Gibbs*, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first mean of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and the recollection of his former vicious propensities, though a source of bitterness, yet furnished a strong evidence of its being the work of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was entangled by its own ardour, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in the manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own: and that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, *signed it with his blood.* But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into dreadful perplexity, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not however consider his

obligation to be the Lord's as hereby nullified ; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended upon *the blood of the cross.*

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November 1786. Soon after this he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. *Birt*, now pastor of the Baptist church, in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the compiler of these memoirs, thus speaks of him:—"Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant ; yet previous to his going to Bristol I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment ; and those who attended the conferences with him soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few," adds Mr. Birt, "have entered upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than *Samuel Pearce ;* and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that *charity* which 'suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' But why should I say this to you ? You knew him yourself."

While at the academy he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behaviour. It is sometimes observable that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future respectability and usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Amidst the tide of popularity, which even at that early period

attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon-street, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by Mr. Hall, now of Cambridge, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them a while on approbation, he was chosen to be their pastor. His ordination was in August 1790. Dr. Evans gave the charge, and the late Mr. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, delivered an address to the church on the occasion. In the year 1791, he married Miss *Sarah Hopkins*, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins of Alcester; a connexion which appears to have been all along a source of great enjoyment to him. The following lines addressed to Mrs. Pearce when he was on a journey, a little more than a year after their marriage, seem to be no more than a common letter: they show, not only the tenderness of his affection, but his heavenly mindedness, his gentle manner of persuading, and how every argument was fetched from religion, and every incident improved from introducing it:—

"Chipping Norton, Aug. 15, 1792.

"I BELIEVE on retrospection that I have hitherto rather anticipated the proposed time of my return, than delayed the proposed interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what shall I say, my love, now to reconcile you to my procrastinating my return for several days more? Why I will say, it appears I am called of God; and I trust the piety of both of us will submit and say, *Thy will be done.*

"You have no doubt perused Mr. Ryland's letter to me, wherein I find he solicits an exchange. The reason he assigns is so obviously important, that a much greater sacrifice than we are called to make, should not be withheld to accomplish it. I therefore propose, God willing, to spend the next Lord's day at Northampton.—I thought of taking tea with you this evening: *that*

would have been highly gratifying to us both; but it must be our meat and drink to do and submit to the will of our heavenly Father. All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. Oh to be perfectly resigned to his disposal—how good it is! May you, my dearest Sarah, and myself, daily prove the sweetness of this pious frame of soul: then all our duties will be sweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleasures will be pure, and all our hopes sanctified.

"This evening I hope to be at Northampton. Let your prayers assist my efforts on the ensuing Sabbath. You will, I trust, find in Mr. R—— a ship richly laden with spiritual treasures. Oh for more supplies from the exhaustless mines of grace!

"S. P."

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship; It was natural therefore to suppose, that while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was *kindred piety*. In the two following letters, addressed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labours at Birmingham:

"May 9, 1792.

"My very dear Brother,

"You live so remote that I can hear nothing of your prosperity at Broughton. I hope you are settled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Master's presence, both in the study and the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament but an insensible, ungrateful heart, and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from last

evening,—*Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away, and be at rest!*

"As a people we are generally united: I believe more so than most churches of the same dimensions. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you, and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

"In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times barren. I suppose my experience is like that of most of my brethren: but I am not weary of my work. I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy: but I want more heart religion: I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence: I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty; but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

'Ye that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?'

"When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit, for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, If I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither; and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

"An observation once made to me helps to support me above water:—"If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit." And again I think, the Lord *dwelleth in Zion*, and loveth it *more* than the dwellings of Jacob.

"S. P."

"Feb. 1, 1793.

"The pleasure which your friendly epistle gave me, rises beyond expression; and it is one of the first wishes of my heart ever to live in your valued friendship. Accept this, and my former letters, my dear brother, as sufficient evidences of my ardent wishes to preserve by correspondence, that mutual remembrance of each other, which on my part will ever be pleasurable, and on yours, I hope, never painful.

"But ah, how soon may we be rendered incapable of such an intercourse! When I left Bristol, I left it with regret. I was sorry to leave my studies to embark (inexperienced as I am) on the tempestuous ocean of public life, where the high blowing winds, and rude and noisy billows, must more or less inevitably annoy the trembling voyager. Nor did it make a small addition to my pain, that I was to part with so many of my dear companions, with whom I had spent so many happy hours, either in furnishing or unburthening the mind. I need not say, among the first of these I considered *Josiah Evans.** But ah, my friend, we shall see his face no more! Through divine grace I hope we shall go to him; but he will not return to us. 'He wasted away, he gave up the ghost, and where is he?' I was prepared for the news because I expected it. The last time I heard directly from him was by a very serious and affectionate letter, which I received, I think, last September. To it I replied; but received no answer. I conjectured, I feared; and now my conjectures and fears are all realized. Dear departed youth! Thy memory will ever be grateful to this affectionate breast. May thy amiable qualities live again in thy surviving friend, that to the latest period of his life he may thank God for the friendship of *Josiah Evans!*

"I assure you, my dear Steadman, I feel, keenly feel, the force of the sentiment, which Blair thus elegantly expresses—

> 'Of joys departed ne'er to be recall'd,
> How painful the remembrance!'

* See a brief account of him, given in part by Mr. Pearce, in Dr. Rippon's *Register*, Vol. 1. p. 512—516.

"But I sorrow not as one without hope. I have a twofold hope: I hope he is now among the spirits of the just made perfect, and that he will be of the blessed and holy number who have part in the first resurrection: and I hope also through the same rich, free, sovereign, almighty, matchless grace, to join the number too. Pleasing thought! Unite to divide no more!

"I preached last night from Rev. xxi. 6. *I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* I took occasion to expound the former part of the chapter, and found therein a pleasure inexpressible; especially when speaking from the first verse,—*And there was no more sea.* The first idea which presented itself to me was this,—*there shall be no bar to intercourse.* Whether the thoughts be just or not, I leave with you and my hearers to determine; but I found happy liberty in illustrating it. What is it that separates one nation, and one part of the globe from another? Is it not the sea? Are not Christians, though all of one family, the common Father of which is God, separated by this sea, or that river, or the other stream below? Yes; but they are one family still. *There* shall be none of these obstructions to communion, or these bars to intercourse; nothing to divide their affections, or disunite their praise for ever.—Forgive my freedoms. I am writing to a friend, to a brother.

"S. P."

There are few, if any, thinking men, but who at some seasons have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even those which are of the greatest importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, they commonly issue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. In another part of the above letter, he thus writes to his friend Steadman:—"I have, since I saw you, been much perplexed about some doctrinal points, both Arminian and Socinian, I believe through reading very attentively, but without sufficient dependence on the Spirit of truth, several controversies

on those subjects; particularly the writings of Whitby, Priestley, and others. Indeed, had the state of mind I was in about ten weeks since, continued, I should have been incapable of preaching with comfort at all. But in the mount of the Lord will he be seen. Just as I thought of giving up, he who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, was pleased, by a merciful though afflicting providence, to set me at a happy liberty.

"I was violently seized with a disorder very rife here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms that I did not expect to see the Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness, that the first thing I attempted was a survey of my own condcut, my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. &c. But ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart sins, such corruptions, and evil propensities, recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be like loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him, whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts? Yes, there I saw peace for guilty consciences was to be *alone* obtained through an almighty Saviour. And oh! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

'Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be.'

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

'A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing.'

Join with me in praising Him, who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Yet this is among the *all things*. I have found it has made me more spiritual in

preaching. I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations.

"Your brother, with ardent affection,

"in the dear Lord Jesus,

"S. P."

From his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial, by an Antinomian spirit which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was, that his ministry was traduced by them as Arminian, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his Divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this, while he had the strongest satisfaction that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance: and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description, as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet, in one of his letters about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people as a "cursed leaven."

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of *spiritual improvement*. This was with Mr. Summers, of London, who often accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality, and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently

rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring forth his ardent soul in expressions of joy and praise. On Aug. 19, 1793, he writes thus :—

"My dear Brother,

"When I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with *you*, I have no concern but to communicate something which may answer the same end we propose in our annual journeys: viz lending some assistance in the important object of *getting and keeping nearer to God.* This I am persuaded is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when, on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the Christian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period; and when on the other, I *feel* the little advance I have made! More *light*, to be sure, I have; but light *without heat* leaves the Christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday, I preached on the duty of engagedness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.* (A text for which I am indebted to our last journey.) While urging the necessity of *heart* religion, including sincerity and ardour, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the ardour which our dear Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. "Ah," I could not help saying, "if our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us, by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him,—we should have been now further from hope than we are from perfection."

'Dear Lord, the ardour of *thy* love
Reproves my cold returns.'

"Two things are causes of daily astonishment to me:—The readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But oh, how animating the prospect! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more: to "be for ever with the Lord." To be *with the Lord* for a week, for a day, for an hour; how sweetly

must the moments pass! But to be *for ever* with the Lord,—*that* instamps salvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it *unspeakable and full of glory!* I have had a few realizing moments since we parted and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. Oh my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus! Heart-affecting views of the cursed effects of sin, are highly salutary to a Christian's growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting is the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In Him, we see all that can charm an angel's heart: in *ourselves*, all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may rest perfectly assured that these nests of iniquity shall ere long be transformed into the temples of God; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

"Last Lord's day I spent the most profitable Sabbath to myself that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

> 'My heart presumes I cannot lose
> The relish all my days.'

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to "hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown." Yet fearing that I shall find, how

> —'Ere one fleeting hour is past,
> The flatt'ring world employs
> Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
> And to pollute my joys.'

"Yours in our dear Saviour,

"S. P."

In April 1794, dropping a few lines to the compiler of these Memoirs, on a Lord's day evening, he thus concludes :—" We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, *It is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.* Oh for much of Enoch's spirit! The head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend,

" S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes :—" We, my friend, have entered into a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature in your intercourse with Heaven ; and I thank that sacred Spirit, whose quickening influences you say you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the rock on which our hopes are built In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded ; especially in these three things :— the exaltation of the Redeemer's glory ; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self delusionsof the human heart ; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living not for themselves, but for *Him* alone.

" Nor hath the word been without its effect ; above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness ; and scarce a day passes over my head, but I say, were it not for an *ungrateful heart*, I should be the happiest man alive ; and *that* excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself are uninterruptedly healthy ; my friends kind ; my soul at rest ; my labours success-

ful, &c. Who should be content and thankful, if I should not? Oh my brother, help me to praise!"

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him:—"I have felt much barrenness," says he, "as to spiritual things, since I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence. A few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconstant heart, is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my dearest friend! I do for you daily. Oh wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a Christian is no longer really happy, and inwardly satisfied, than whilst he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, *feel* that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ I fear abates, and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a "good preacher," as the world terms it, has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that "It is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him." But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

"I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! With what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am by some praised. I am followed by many. I am respected by most of my acquaintance.

But all this is nothing ; yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing "this testimony, *that I please* GOD." Oh thou Friend of sinners, humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love.

"To-morrow morning I set off for Launceston. I write to-night, lest my stay in Cornwall might make my delay appear tedious to the dear and deserving object of my most undissembled love. Oh my Sarah, had I as much proof that I love *Jesus Christ*, as I have of my love to *you*, I should prize it more than rubies! As often as you can find an hour for correspondence, think of your more than ever affectionate

"S. P."

In another to Mr. Summers, dated Nov. 10, 1794, he says—"I suppose I shall visit London in the spring. Prepare my way by communion both with God and man. I hope your soul prospers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever since the day of my espousals with him. Oh my brother, help me to praise! I cannot say that I am quite so exalted in my frame to-day; yet still I acknowledge, what I have lived upon for weeks, —That were there no being, or thing in the universe, beside God and me, I should be at no loss for happiness. Oh!

'Tis heaven to rest in his embrace,
And no where else but there.'

"S. P."

HYMN

Mr. PEARCE, *soon after his conversion.*

1 O how sweet it is to me,
'Fore my gracious Lord to fall,
Talk with him continually,
Make my blessed Jesus all.

2 Other pleasures I have sought,
Tried the world a thousand times;
Peace pursu'd, but found it not,
For I still retain'd my crimes.

3 Never could my heart be bless'd,
Till from guilt I found it freed;
Jesus now has me released;
I in him am free indeed.

4 Saviour, bind me to thy cross,
Let thy love possess my heart;
All besides I count but dross:
Christ and I will never part.

5 In his blood such peace I find,
In his love such joy is given;
He who is to Jesus join'd,
Finds on earth a little heaven.

The following lines appear to have been written soon after, if not before, his entrance on the work of the ministry :—

EXCITEMENT TO EARLY DUTY:

OR,

The Lord's Day Morning.

1 WHENE'ER I look unto thy word,
And read about my dearest Lord,
The Friend of sinful man;
And trace my Saviour's footsteps there,
What humble love, what holy fear
Through all his conduct ran!

2 If I regard the matchless grace
He show'd unto the human race,
How he for them became
A poor sojourner here below,
Oppress'd by pain and sorrow too,
I can't but love his name.

3 And when I view his love to God,
Those steps in which the Saviour trod,
I long to tread them too;
I long to be inspired with zeal
To execute my Father's will,
As Jesus used to do.

4 I read that he, on duty bent,
To lonely places often went,
To seek his Father there:
The early morn and dewy ground
Can witness, they the Saviour found
Engaged in fervent prayer.

5 And did my Saviour use to pray,
Before the light unveil'd the day?
And shall I backward be?
No, dearest Lord, forbid the thought;
Help me to fight, as Jesus fought,
Each foe that hinders me.

6 And you, my friends, who love his name,
Who love to imitate the Lamb,
And more of Jesus know;
Come, let us all surround his throne,
And see what blessings on his own
Our Saviour will bestow.

7 Though fears be great, temptations strong,
And though we oft have waited long,
Perhaps he may design
This morn to give each soul to see,
And say with Paul, "He died for me,"
And my Redeemer's mine.

8 Now cheerful we'll begin to pray,
That he will wash our sins away
In his atoning blood;
That he his blessing may bestow,
And give each sinner here to know
That he's a child of God.

ON THE SCRIPTURES.

1 Stupendous love in Christ doth dwell,
Love which no mortal tongue can tell;
But yet so gracious is the Lord,
He tells the people in his word.

2 Here, in those lines of love, I see
What Christ my Saviour did for me;

Here I behold the wondrous plan
By which he saves rebellious man.

3 Here we may view the Saviour, GOD,
Oppress'd by pain, o'erwhelm'd with blood;
And if we ask the reason, Why?
He kindly says, "For you I die."

4 Here love and mercy, truth and grace,
Conspicuous shine in Jesus' face;
Here we may trace the wondrous road,
By which a sinner comes to God.

5. O boundless grace! O matchless love
That brought the Saviour from above,
That caus'd the God for man to die,
Expiring in an agony!

6 Then say, my soul, canst thou engage
In tracing o'er this sacred page,
And there his love and mercy see,
And not love him who died for thee?

7 O stupid heart! O wretched soul!
So cold, so languid, and so dull;
Angels desire this love to know,
O may I feel these longings too!

8 Descend, thou Spirit of the Lord,
Thy light, and help, and grace afford;
And, while I read these pages o'er,
Constrain my soul to love thee more.

CHAPTER II.

HIS LABORIOUS EXERTIONS IN PROMOTING MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN, AND OFFERING HIMSELF TO BECOME A MISSIONARY.

Mr. Pearce has been uniformly the spiritual and the active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the *introduction of the gospel among the heathen.*

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society at Kettering, in October 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of £13 : 2 : 6, with which the subscription was begun, was added £70, which was collected and transmitted to the treasurer; and the leading members of the Church formed themselves into an Assistant Society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that our brethren, *Thomas* and *Carey*, should go on a mission to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he laboured with increasing ardour in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labour, smiling in every company, and blessing God.

During his labours and journeys, on this important mission, he wrote several letters to his friends, an extract or two from which will discover the state of his mind at that period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home :

TO MR. STEADMAN.

"Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1793.

"My very dear Brother,

"Union of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men, and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side; I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myfelf as the first aggressor; but I excuse while I condemn, and so would you, did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation. Birmingham is a central place; the inhabitants are numerous; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months, I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's day week I expect to add to their number. These persons came to my house to propose the most important of all inquiries,—"What must we do to be saved?" I have been thus engaged some weeks during the greatest part of most days. This, with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit,—*salvation;* not only rest our hopes on the same foundation,—*Jesus Christ;* but we feel alike respecting the poor heathens. Oh how Christianity expands the mind! What tenderness for our poor fellow-sinners! What sympathy for their moral misery! What desires to do them everlasting good, doth it provoke! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings! O how I love that man whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the precious gospel to idolatrous heathen. Excellently, my dear brother, you observe that,

great as its blessings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a Christian country, inexpressibly greater must they shine on the newly illuminated mind of a converted pagan.

"We shall be glad of all your assistance in a pecuniary way, as the expense will be heavy.—Dear brother Carey has paid us a visit of love this week. He preached excellently to-night. I expect brother Thomas next week or the week after. I wish you would meet him here. I have a house at your command, and a heart greatly attached to you. "S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

"Feb. 23, 1793.

"I am willing to go anywhere, and do any thing in my power; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting,—hoped for,—dreaded day, March 13, (the day of our brethren, *Carey* and *Thomas's* solemn designation at Leicester.) Oh how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me! Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the 20th chapter of the Acts, and especially verses 36—38. But why grieve? We shall see them again. Oh yes; them and the children whom the Lord will give them;—we and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again, not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise. "S. P."

From the day of the departure of the missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking *at home;* but this did not satisfy him. In October 1794, we were given to understand that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connexions were much concerned about it, and endeavoured to persuade him that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges. And nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the committee : nor could he be happy for *them* to decide upon it, without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and when assembled, hearing an account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connexions against it.

On October 4, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might follow him, as follows :

"Last Wednesday I rode to Northampton, where a ministers' meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the mission. We read some fresh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that we could obtain no suitable persons to send out to the assistance of our brethren. Now what do you think was said at this meeting? My dear brother! do not be surprised that *all* present united in opinion, that in all our connexion there was no man known to us so suitable as *you,* provided you were disposed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumstance ; and one thing more I cannot refrain from saying, that were it manifestly the will of God, I should call that the happiest hour of my life, which witnessed our *both* embarking with our families on board one ship, as helpers of the servants of Jesus Christ already in Hindostan. Yes ; I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents, for the pleasures and perils of this glorious service. Often my heart in the sincerest ardours thus breathes forth its desires unto God,—"Here am I, send me." But I am ignorant whether you, from experience, can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendship enough for me to lay open

your meditations on this subject in your next. If you had half the exercises that I have, it will be a relief to your labouring mind: or if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you still. Oh, if I could find a heart that had been tortured and ravished like my own in this respect, I should form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendship of a novel species. With eagerness should I communicate all the vicissitudes of my sensations, and with eagerness listen to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I should seek, and with gratitude receive direction and support, and I hope, feel a new occasion of thankfulness when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to *you*, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowship of the Spirit; or is it ths confidence that I have in your friendship that thus directs my pen? Tell me, my dear ———! Tell me how you have felt, and how you still feel on this subject; and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionate friend and brother, "S. P."

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a *narrative* of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the Committee were met at Northampton according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:—

"October 8, 1794. Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labour for the dear Redeemer amongst the *heathen;* and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction by adopting these two resolutions;—First, That I will as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavour to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling of any desire of this nature, until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevents me from immediately resolving to en-

upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

"This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord help me!

"It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion; and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to Heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt a strong desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany Bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New-Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going, and a neighbouring minister very seriously conversed with me upon the subject.

"While I was at the Bristol Academy, the desire remained, but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at *Coldford*, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the *Forest of Deane*, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world;* and I, weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, Thus it was with the

apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work like this, I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

"But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, amongst the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till after a residence of some months I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* Then it was, that, in Mr. Horne's phrase, "I felt a passion for missions." Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

"As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm lxvii. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;*—and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words, On the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer-meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon-street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sabbath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10. *Thy kingdom come;* and urged with ardour and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

"As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they

have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

"Indeed it has been a frequent mean of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been swiftly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

"Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother *Carey's* ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published; entitled, *An inquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens.* This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard of the heathen, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating: but my mind became now inclined to go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connexions with the dear people of God in Birmingham, restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body, as I remember, except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the *manner* of his saying, "Well, you will come after us." My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we both then thought that my relation to the church in Cannon-street, and usefulness there, forbade any such attempt. However, I had made it a constant matter of prayer,

often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind the more love I have felt for God; and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been to engage as a missionary among the heathen.

"Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connexions in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

"But since our brethren's letters have informed us that there are such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan,—that priests and people are ready to hear the word,—and that preachers are a thousand times more wanted, than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their condition; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts of which they are the subjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and which time seems to increase.

It has pleased God also lately to teach me more than ever, that HIMSELF is the *fountain* of happiness; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be obtained as well in an eastern jungle, amongst Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished parts of Europe. The very *disposition*, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified,——I say, the *disposition* itself is heaven begun below! I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord, without dissolving into love; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

"I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connexions, disappointment in my hopes, &c. &c.: And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts,—*I am God's servant; and God is my friend.* In this, I anticipate happiness

in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor heathens unto Christ; and I am willing to be offered as a sacrifice on the service of the faith of the gospel.

"Mr. Horne justly observes, 'that, in order to justify a man's undertaking the work of a missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as exclude an engagement.'—As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and *impartial* men in this matter, and with them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess; and I can hardly persuade myself that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work, without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration; and here alone I hesitate."—Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them leaving it with his brethren to decide when they had heard the whole.

The Committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to brother Pearce's qualifications, and greatly approved of his spirit, yet were unanimously of opinion *that he ought not to go;* and that not merely on account of his connexions at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of brother *Carey*, but on account of the mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion, brother Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the same effect.*

On receiving the opinion of the Committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P———, as follows:—

"Northampton, Nov. 13, 1794.

My dear Sarah,

"I am disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour's will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I

* See Periodical Accounts, No. V. p. 374.

expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that, I think (if by any means such an issue could be insured) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the Committee consulted. The case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were near two hours in deciding. At last, *time* forced them to a point; and their answer I inclose for your satisfaction. Pray take care of it; it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labour beneath a burden of guilt another day.

"I am my dear Sarah's own

"S. P."

The decision of the Committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country than he could have been without it; yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says in a letter to Mr. Fuller—"Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my dear Redeemer. I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so I am employed as he would have me; but surely we need pray hard that God would send some more help to Hindostan."

In January 1796, when he was first informed by the Secretary, of a young man (Mr. Fountain) being desirous of going, of the character that was given of him by our friend Mr. Savage, of London, and of a Committee Meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in answer—"Your letter, just arrived, put—I was going to say another soul into my little body; at least it has added new life to

the soul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being absent from your proposed meeting. No, no; I must be there, (for my own sake I mean,) and try to sing with you, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkness."*

In August the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows—"Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the gospel in his neighbourhood, as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the whole shall be effectually leavened. O THAT I WERE THERE TO WITNESS THE DELIGHTFUL PROCESS! But whither am I running? . . . I LONG TO WRITE YOU FROM HINDOSTAN!"

On receiving other Letters from India, in January, 1797, he thus writes:—"Perhaps you are now rejoicing in spirit with me over fresh intelligence from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myself.† He speaks of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your possession. If his correspondence has produced the same effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladness and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witness the pleasure their contents will impart to all whose hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the gospel to the Booteas!"

Being detained from one of our mission meetings by preparing the Periodical Accounts for the press, he soon after wrote as follows: "We shall now get out No. IV. very soon. I hope it will go to the press in a very few days. Did you notice, that the very day on which we invited all our friends to a day of prayer on behalf of the mission, (Dec. 28, 1796,) was the same in which brother

* The 428th Hymn of Dr. Rippon's Selection, frequently sung at our Committee Meetings.

‡ See these Letters printed in *Periodical Accounts*, No. IV. p. p. 294, 301.

Carey sent h is best and most interesting accounts to the Society ? I hope you had solemn and sweet seasons at Northampton. On many accounts I should have rejoiced to have been with you : yet I am satisfied that on the whole I was doing best at home."

It has been already observed, that for a month preceding the decision of the Committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary was not shown to the Committee at the time, but merely the preceding *narrative.* Since his death a few of them have perused it ; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they dared not oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself. It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labour in England or in India. A few passages, however, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

" Oct. 8, 1784. Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus ; and earnestly implored full satisfaction respecting the path of duty.—I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts ; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing Him who is invisible !"

" Oct. 10. Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. Whilst noticing in prayer the state of the millions of heathen who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

" Afterwards was much struck whilst (on my knees before God in secret) I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verse I fancied very applicable to the Church in Cannon-street : but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am ? The third chapter of Habakkuk too well expresses that

mixture of *solemnity* and *confidence* with which I contemplate the work of the mission.

" Whilst at prayer-meeting to night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages of scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14 : but never *felt* crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind ; and the desire of living *wholly* to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fullness or want, honour and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the heathen.

" I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this Island will admit. I long to raise my Master's banner in climes where the sound of his fame hath but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that *all* nations shall flow unto it.

" The conduct and success of Stach, Boonish, and other Moravian Missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind, and a servant of God.

" Oct. 13. Being taken up with visiters the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vanish as fast as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God !

" Oct. 15. There are in Birmingham 50,000 inhabitants ; and, exclusive of the vicinity, ten ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants, and not so many gospel preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his ministers to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature : why should we be so disproportionate in our labours ? Peculiar circumstances must

not be urged against positive commands : I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to take the means more proportionate to the multitude.

" To-night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife's illness when she first came into the country, I endeavoured to realize myself not only with a sick, but a *dead* wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first : but on recollection I considered that the same God ruled in India as in Europe ; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, *Thy will be done.*

Oct. 17. This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view may be clearly ascertained—the knowledge of his will.

" Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood ; the being of a God, the relation of mankind to him, with the divine inspiration of the scriptures ; and the review afforded me great satisfaction.* I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read and seriously considered Doddridge's three excellent Sermons on the Evidences of the Christian Religion, which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book, before I fell on my knees before God to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis ; and I have received more *solid* satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

* There is a wide difference between admitting these principles in theory and *making use of them.* David might have worn Saul's accoutrements at a parade : but in meeting Goliath he must go forth in an armour that had been *tried.* A mariner may sit in his cabin at his ease while the ship is in harbour : but ere he undertakes a voyage he must examine its soundness, and whether it will endure the storms which may overtake him.

"I also considered, since the gospel is true, since Christ is the head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his servants in respect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here refer to our Lord's commission, which I could not but consider as universal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it—and as the command has never been repealed; as there are millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exercised; as I can produce no counter-revelation; and as I lie under no natural impossibilities of performing it . . . . I concluded that I, as a servant of Christ, was bound by this law.

"I took the narrative of my experience, and statement of my views on this subject, in my hand, and bowing down before God, I earnestly besought an impartial and enlightened spirit. I then perused that paper; and can now say, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) not one doubt upon the subject. I therefore resolved to close this solemn season with reading a portion of both Testaments, and earnest prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the Society, and particularly for the success of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his blessing, presence, and grace to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly I read the xlixth chapter of Isaiah; and with what sweetness! I never read a chapter in private with such feelings since I have been in the ministry. The 8th, 9th, 10th, 20th, and 21st verses I thought remarkably suitable.

"Read also part of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter to the Philippians. O that for *me* to live may be *Christ* alone! Blessed be my dear Saviour, in prayer I have had such fellowship with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New-Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the shadow of death!

"Oct. 18. I dreamed that I saw one of the Christian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleasant will it be to sit down at the Lord's table with our black brethren, and hear Jesus preached in their language! Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, In Christ there is neither

Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are ONE in him.

"Have been happy to-day in completing the manuscript of Periodical Accounts, No. I. Any thing relative to the salvation of the heathen brings a certain pleasure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converse, nor read, nor study, nor preach with satisfaction without reference to this subject.

"Oct. 20. Was a little discouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbald's conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever present to my mind, in brother Carey's words,—*The work is God's.*

"In the evening I found some little difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake of wealth, I sat confounded before the Lord that I should ever have indulged such a thought; and looking up to him, I set about it with cheerfulness, and found that I was making a sensible advance, although I can never apply till 11 o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.*

Preached from 2 Kings iv. 26. *It is well.* Was much enlarged both in thought and expression. Whilst speaking of the satifaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itself in all circumstances and times in the hand of *a good God*, I felt that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it, beside God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou hast taught me that THOU ALONE art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am free from all solicitude about any

* Night studies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the first occasion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health, and brought on that train of nervous sensations with which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accustomed to converse on this subject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the ministry, that owing to his enervated state, he sometimes dreaded the approach of public services to such a degree, that he would rather have submitted to stripes than engage in them; and that while in the pulpit, he was frequently distressed with the apprehension of falling over it.

temporal prospects or concerns. If *thy* presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach my honour, and fatigue my rest: and thou hast said, *My presence shall go with thee.* Enough, Lord, I ask for nothing, nothing more.

"But how sad the proofs of our depravity; and how insecure the best frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expression from a person who passed, caught my ear, and occurred so often to my thoughts for some minutes as to bring guilt upon my mind, and overwhelm me with shame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all such things, secretly confessed the sin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-seat. On such occasions how precious a Mediator is to the soul!

"Oct. 22. I did not for the former part of the day feel my wonted ardour for the work of a Missionary; but rather an inclination to consult flesh and blood, and look at the worst side of things. I did so: but when on my knees before God in prayer about it, I first considered that my judgment was still equally satisfied, and my conscience so convinced, that I durst not relinquish the work for a thousand worlds! And then I thought that this dull frame had not been without its use; as I was now fully convinced, that my desire to go did not arise from any fluctuation of inconstant passions, but the settled convictions of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that let what difficulties soever be in the way, I would (provided the society approved) surmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable satisfaction of mind, in my resolution of leaving the decision in the hands of my brethren. May God rightly dispose their hearts! I have no doubt but he will.

"Oct 23. Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalle language. How pleasant it is to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language, is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views.

"Oct. 24. O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to-day! It is the *second* of those days of extraordinary devotion which I have set apart for seeking God, in relation to the mission. How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

"Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a matter as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often, with holy admiration, I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again, especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 148. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.*

"Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne's *Letters on Missions*, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, 'Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?' I replied spontaneously, Blessed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

"Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62d chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathens, the Society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all Missionaries whom God hath sent of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

"The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things, which have been some time accumulating, have united their pressure, and made me groan being burdened. Whilst at a prayer-meeting I looked round on my Christian friends, and said to

myself, A few months more and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom, I resolved, though faint, yet to pursue, not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* Yet in the depth of his agonies he added, *Thy will be done.* This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. P. replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her: but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect—'I hope you will be no more uneasy on *my* account. For the last two or three days, I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy anywhere.'

"Should this little Diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a Missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at evening-tide it is light; thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a healthy place; thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. O love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!

"Oct. 26. Had much enlargement this morning, whilst speaking on the nature, extent, and influence of divine love: what designs it formed—with what energy it acted—with what perse-

verance it pursued its object—what obstacles it surmounted—what difficulties it conquered—and what sweetness it imparted under the heaviest loads and severest trials! Almost through the day I enjoyed a very desirable frame; and on coming home, my wife and I had some conversation on the subject of my going. She said, Though in general the thought was painful; yet there were some seasons when she had no preference, but felt herself disposed to go or stay, as the Lord should direct.

"This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly stating my desires, requesting his advice, and proposing a meeting of the Committee on the business. I feel great satisfaction arising from my leaving the matter to the determination of my honoured brethren, and *to God* through them.

"Oct. 27. To-day I sent a packet to our brethren in India. I could not forbear telling brother Carey all my feelings, views, and expectations: but without saying I should be entirely governed by the opinion of the Society.

"Oct. 28. Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rodgers, of Philadelphia, to-day, upon the subject with freedom and warmth, and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming societies to encourage arts, liberty, and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted heathens; or in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proof of concurring with us in a design, which they speak of with such approbation? With this I sent *Horne's Letters*. I will follow both with my prayers, and who can tell?

"Oct. 29. Looked over the *Code of Hindoo Laws* to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice. The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be abased by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false-witnessing, theft, and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the gospel of Jesus; and how desirable that they should embrace it! Ought not means to be used? Can we assist

them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters were penned about the beginning of the Kollee Jogue, which must be soon after the deluge: and are not 4000 years long enough for 100 millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

"Oct. 31. I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain; and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

"Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

"I then read over the narrative of my experience, and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

"Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17, when after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, *Did I then use lightness, when I was thus minded?—Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea; nay, nay?* The *piety* of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the *seriousness* of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

"Thinking that I might get some assistance from *David Brainerd's* experience, I read his life to the time of his being appointed a missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine, yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows, are my own; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him, 'I feel exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement (or sta-

tion) *when* and *where* he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favour of man to lean upon; for I knew God's favour was infinitely better, and that it was no matter *where*, or *when*, or *how* Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.'

"Read chapters ii. iii. iv. v. and vi. of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer, I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the Society, the Missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon-street, my family, and ministry; but yet all was dullness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart; when of a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy: the attractions of his cross, how powerful! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine, as to my animation; like Mary at the Master's feet, weeping for tenderness of soul; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, and creature-love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which by far exceeded any thing I ever felt before, and is impossible to be described to or conceived of by those who have never experienced it; all compelled me to *vow* that I would, by his leave, serve him among the heathen. The Bible lying open before me, (on my knees,) many passages caught my eye, and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life, I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. All was delightful, for

Christ was all, and in all. Many times I concluded prayer; but when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to *burn* for God.

"And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstances can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a Master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas, or of Spira!

"This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Reviewed a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed, as to yield me a gratification.

"Nov. 3. This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that *I may be mistaken*, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready asquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity: and that if I go not to the work, it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest I am, *oppressed;* undertake for me!

"Nov. 5. At times to-day I have been reconciled to the thought of staying, if any brethren should so advise; but at other times I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey's portrait as it hangs in my study, I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labours: every look calls up a hundred

thoughts, all of which inflame my desire to be a fellow-labourer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I have resolved upon, that, the Lord keeping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the mission at home.

"Nov. 7. This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day for his wisdom to preside in the committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

"I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer to-day. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its strugglings in relation to my going or staying: yet I have been enabled to commit the issue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will."

The result of the Committee Meeting has already been related; together with the state of his mind, as far as could be collected from his letters, for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labours, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labours, from the ardour or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that *it was in our hearts to build him an house*, though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us. Suffice it, that in matters of EVERLASTING MOMENT he has engaged to perfect *that which concerns us*. In this he hath condescended to bind himself, as by an oath, for our consolation: here, therefore, we may safely consider our spiritual desires as indicative of his designs: but it is otherwise in various instances in regard to present duty.

CHAPTER III.

HIS EXERCISES AND LABOURS FROM THE TIME OF HIS GIVING UP THE IDEA OF GOING ABROAD, TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS LAST AFFLICTION.

Had the multiplied labours of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these Memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of Spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect a few gleanings, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London to collect for the *Baptist Mission*, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the *Evangelical Society* in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life, a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of November 13, 1794,* after the decision of the committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his dear Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:

* See page 305.

"December 13, 1794.

"My dear Sarah,

"I am just brought on the wings of celestial mercy safe to my Sabbath's station. I am well: and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for *you*. I long to know how our dear Louisa's pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill . . . dying? It is still right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our repinings———Repinings! no; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for *her*. This we must allow. It is best for *us*. Do we expect it? O what poor, ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven: if we do not *then* see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or if that same *kind Providence* has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in Him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration,—'*God* so loved the world, that he *spared not* his own Son.' Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us: and shall we refuse our child to Him? He gave his Son to *suffer:* He takes our children to *enjoy:* Yes; to enjoy *Himself*.

"Yours, with the tenderest regard,

"S. P."

In June 1795, he attended the Association at Kettering, partly on account of some missionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

"From a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hands of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have received no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. Oh that I may return to you, and the dear church of God, in the *fullness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and the supports of the blessed gospel. Oh that you may get and keep near to God, and in *Him* find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband's absence!

"Mr. Hall preached, last evening, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental season! I was charmed and warmed. Oh that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to him as altogether lovely! I am unable to write more now. To-day I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you!"

In July 1795, he received a pressing invitation from the *General Evangelical Society* in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To this invitation he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. *M'Dowal*:—

"Birmingham, August 3, 1796.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"I received your favour of the 22d ult. and for the interesting reason you assign, transmit a 'speedy answer.' The Society, on whose behalf you wrote, I have ever considered with the respect due to the real friends of the best of causes—the cause of God and of his Christ: a cause which embraces the most important and durable interests of our fellow-men: and your name, dear sir, I have been taught to hold in more than common esteem by my dear brother and father, Messrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent institution which you are engaged in supporting, I am persuaded, deserves more than the good wishes or prayers of

your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, on this side the channel; and it will yield me substantial pleasure to afford personal assistance in your pious labours. But, for the present, I am sorry to say, I must decline your proposal; being engaged to spend a month in London this autumn, on the business of our *Mission Society*, of which you have probably heard.

"When I formed my present connexions with the church in Birmingham, I proposed an annual freedom for six weeks, from my pastoral duties; and should the 'Evangelical Society' express a wish for my services the ensuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to spend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a visit would be most serviceable to the good design. I only request, that should this be their desire, I may receive the information as soon at they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myself from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint. I entreat you to make my Christian respects acceptable to the gentlemen who compose the Society, and assure yourself that I am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately,

"Your brother, in our Lord Jesus,

"S. P."

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go over in the month of June 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that an itinerating mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that if executed during the vacation at the Bristol Academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer:

"May 30, 1796.

"My very dear Brother,

"I thank you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God, who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion. I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan; the place; the mode; the persons; all, *all* meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before! Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on; when they set out &c.? I hope ere long to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

"Oh, my dear brother, let us go on still praying, contriving, labouring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the small stone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

"What pleasures do those lose who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause! How thankful should we be, that we are not strangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity! I am, beyond expression,

"Your affectionate brother in Christ,

"S. P."

On May 31, he set off for Dublin, and "the Lord prospered his way, so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent *in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace*, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power, and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity praise God for sending his message to them by this dear

ambassador of Christ. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with other churches of Christ in deploring the loss they have sustained by his death.

"He was earnestly solicited by the *Evangelical Society* to renew his visit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had signified his compliance; and the time was fixed: but the breaking out of the late rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips."

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. M'Dowal. The following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there a little more than a week :—

"Dublin, June 31, 1796.

"I long to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

"I am in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place, and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope *Christian* friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

"But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then: I am at the house of a Mr. H———, late High-Sheriff for the city: a gentleman of opulence, respectability, and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Calvinistic presbyterian; an elder of Dr. M'Dowal's church; has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to *style* of living, I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet in my present situation it is convenient. It would, however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to

enjoy, and to call *my own*. Oh, 'tis this, *'tis this*, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

"The Lord's day after I wrote to you last, I preached for Dr. M'Dowal in the morning at half past eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket-street at seven. On Tuesday evening I preached at a hospital, and on Thursday evening at Plunket-street again. Yesterday, for the Baptists in the morning, Dr. M'Dowal at five, and at Plunket-street at seven.

"The hours of worship will appear singular to you; they depend on the usual *meal* times. We breakfast at ten; dine between four and five, sometimes between five and six; take tea from seven to nine; and sup from ten to twelve.

"I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the *consciences* of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here:—as sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c.; and last night, told an immense crowd of professors of the first rank, 'that if they made custom and fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the fashion.'

"I expected my faithfulness would have given them offence; but I am persuaded it was the way to please the Lord, and those whom I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgences to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five o'clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold 1,500, or 2,000 people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning I preached on the subject of *public worship*, from Psalm v. 7, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and surprised, at the five o'clock meeting, to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am myself,—a mere nothing: and how strong I am

in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of God. Oh help me to praise, for it is he alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briars of the wilderness.

"You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a *praying people* at Birmingham; and I believe, that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in my public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

"I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the University here, and with two of the fellows of the College; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his gospel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the Archbishop: but God has raised another house for them here, where they preach with much success, and have begun a meeting in the College, which promises fresh prosperity to the cause of Jesus."

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from some notes in his own handwriting, and partly from the account given by his friend, Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest, and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances, and earnest recommendations of prayer-meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th, he wrote to his friend, Mr. Summers, as follows:

"My dear Friend,

"If you mean to abide by my opinion, I say, come to Dublin, and come directly! I have been most delightfully disappointed. I expected darkness, and behold, light; sorrow, and I have had cause for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many, as well as myself, will have cause to praise him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingness: never hath the power of God more evidently rested upon me. The harvest here is great indeed; and the Lord of the harvest hath enabled me to labour in it with delight.

'I praise him for all that is past;
I trust him for all that's to come.'

"The Lord hath of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the college have been awakened; and two of the *fellows* are sweet evangelical preachers. One of them is of a spirit serene as the summer evening, and sweet as the breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have spent several mornings in college with various students, who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jerusalem's walls. But I hope you will come; and then you will see for yourself. If not, I will give you some pleasant details when we meet in England.

"S. P."

Mr. Summers complied with this invitation; and of the last seven or eight days of Mr. Pearce's continuance at Dublin, he himself thus writes:—

"Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon I went with my friend Mr. Summers, to Mr. K——'s. Spent a very agreeable day. Miss A. K—— remarked two wonders in Dublin:—a praying society composed of students at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together. We sung: I read, and

expounded the xiith of Isaiah; and prayed.—At seven we went to a prayer-meeting at Plunket-street: very large attendance. Mr. R—— and Mr. S—— prayed, and I spoke from Rom. x. 12, 13. *There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*—Many seemed affected.—After I had closed the opportunity, I told them some of my own experience, and requested, that if any present wished for conversation, they would come to me, either that evening, or on Thursday evening in the vestry.—Five persons came in:—one had been long impressed with religion, but could never summon courage to open her heart before. Another, a Miss W——, attributed her first impressions, under God, to my ministry; and told me that her father had regularly attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her parents.—The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived.—One young lady, a Miss H——, staid in the meeting-house, exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K—— spoke to her—She said, she would speak with me on Thursday.

"Tuesday, 5th. Went to Leislip. At seven—preached to a large and affected auditory.

"Wednesday, 6th. Mr. H—— and myself went to Mrs. M'G——, to inquire about the young lady who was so much affected at the meeting. Mrs. M'G—— said her mother and sister were pious; that she had been very giddy; but that the last Lord's day she was seriously awakened to a sense of sin; had expressed her delight in religion, and fled for refuge to the blood of Jesus.—Her sister was introduced to me; a sweetly pious lady.—I agreed to wait for an interview with the young lady at Mr. H——'s, in Eccles-street, to-morrow.

"Thursday, 7th. Miss H——, her sister, and Mrs. M'G——, came to Eccles-street.—A most delightful interview. Seldom have I seen such proficiency in so short a time.—That day week, at Plunket-street, she received her first serious impressions. Her concern deepened at Mass-lane, on Lord's day morning—more so

in the evening at Plunket-street—but most of all on Monday night. I exhorted them to begin a prayer and experience meeting; and they agreed. Blessed be God! this strengthens my hands greatly. At seven o'clock, preached at Plunket-street, from Jer. l. 4, 5. *Going and weeping,—they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.*—A full house; and an impressive season. Tarried after the public services were ended, to converse on religion. The most pleasing case was a young man of Mr. D———'s.

"Saturday, 9th. Went with my friend Mr. S——, to call on Miss H——. Found her at her mother's—We first passed the door—She ran out after us—Seemed happy; but agitated. Ran and called her mother—Soon we saw the door of the parlour open, and a majestic lady appeared; who, as she entered the room, thus accosted me:—Who art thou, oh blessed of the Lord? Welcome to the widow's house! Accept the widow's thanks for coming after the child whom thou hast begotten in the gospel!'—I was too much overcome to do more than take by the hand the aged saint. A solemn silence ensued for a minute or two; when the old lady recovering, expressed the fullness of her satisfaction respecting the reality of the change effected in her daughter, and her gratitude for great refreshment of her own soul, by means of my poor labours. She said, she had known the Lord during forty years, being called under the ministry of John Fisher, in the open air, when on a visit to an officer who was her brother-in-law. She told us much of her experience, and promised to encourage the prayer-meeting, which I proposed to be held in her house every Lord's day evening. They are to begin to morrow, after preaching.—It was a pleasant meeting; and we returned with pleasure to Eccles-street. After we rose up to come away, the old lady affectionately said, 'May the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush attend you wherever you go, for ever and ever!'"

The young lady some months after wrote to Mr. S——, and says, amongst other things,—"I have great reason to be thankful for the many blessings the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me, and in particular for his sending Mr. *Pearce* to this city; and that through his means I have been convinced of sin. I am happy

to inform you, that through grace I am enabled to walk in the narrow path. The Lord has taken away all desire for worldly company; all my desires now are to attend on the means of grace. Blessed be his name, I often find him present in them. My mother and I often remember the happy time we spent in your company at our house. She often speaks of it with great pleasure, and blesses the Lord for the change which grace has wrought in me."

"Lord's day, 10th. (The last Sabbath.) Preached in the morning at Mary's abbey, from Job xxxiii. 27, 28. *He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light* —A happy season.—In the afternoon, having dined with Mr. W——, he took me to Swift's alley, the Baptist place of worship, where I gave an exhortation on brotherly love, and administered the Lord's supper. At Mr. W——'s motion, the church requested me to look out a suitable minister for them.—In the evening, I preached at Plunket-street, from 2 Tim. i. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!*—A very solemn season.

"Monday, 11th. Met the dear Christian friends, for the last time, at a prayer-meeting in Plunket-street.—The Lord was there!—Several friends spent the evening with us afterwards at Mr. H——'s.

"Tuesday, 12th. Went aboard at four; arrived at Liverpool on Thursday; and safely at home on Friday, July 15, 1796. Blessed be the Preserver of men, the Saviour of sinners, and the help of his servants, for evermore, amen, amen."

Some time after, writing to his friend who accompanied him, he says, "I have received several letters from Dublin:—two from Master B., one from Miss H——, one from M——, three or four from the Baptist friends, and some from others, whom I cannot recollect.—Mr. K—— lately called on me in his way from Bath to Holyhead. We talked of you, and of our Lord, and did not part till we had presented ourselves before the throne."

During his labours in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighbourhood ;* and a very liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only *six months* of the year. When that was declined, *three months* were proposed ; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it. He did so ; and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet after the maturest deliberation, he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject ; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard that he should be so willing to leave them to go on a mission among the heathen ; but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a wordly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some further account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters :—

"Birmingham, August 12, 1796.

"Oh my dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the Society, I am sure you would persuade yourself that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardour.

"I fear (I had almost said) that I shall never see your face in the flesh, but if any thing can add to the joy which the presence

* At the *Black Rock* the residence of some of the most genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin.

of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity to him, will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there, is one of (if not) *the* greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labours, your sufferings, and your pleasures on this side the eternal world: but all my brethren here are of a mind, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad; and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart is at Mudnabatty, and at times I even hope to find my body there: but with the Lord I leave it; *He* knows my wishes, my motives, my regret; *He* knows all my soul; and, depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is an humbling thought to me, that he sees I am unfit for such a station, and unworthy such an honour as to bear his name among the heathen. But I must be thankful still, that though he appoints me not to a post in foreign service, he will me to stand centinel at home. In this situation may allow I have grace to be faithful unto death!

"I hardly wonder at your being pained on account of the effects produced in the minds of your European friends, by the news of your engagement in the Indigo business, because I imagine you are ignorant of the process of that matter amongst us. When I received the news, I glorified God in sincerity, on account of it, and gave most hearty thanks to him for his gracious appearance on your behalf: but at the same time I feared, lest through that undertaking, the work of the Mission might in some way or other be impeded. The same impression was made on the minds of many others: yet no blame was attached, in our view, to you. Our minds were only alarmed for the future; not disposed to censure for the past. Had you seen a faithful copy of the prayers, the praises, and the conversation of the day in which your letters were read, I know you would not have entertained one unkind thought of the Society towards you. Oh no, my dear brother, far be it from us to lay an atom upon your spirits of a painful nature. Need I say, We do love, we do respect you, we do confide too much in you to *design* the smallest occasion of distress to your heart. But I close this subject. In future we will atone for an

expression that might bear a harsh construction. We will strengthen, we will support, we will comfort, we will encourage you in your arduous work :—all, *all* shall be love and kindness; glory to God, and good will to men. If I have done aught that is wrong, as an individual, pardon me: If we have said aught amiss, as a Society, pardon us. Let us forbear one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

"By the time this reaches you, I hope you will have received Nos. I. and II. of Periodical Accounts. Should you find any thing in them, which you think had better be omitted, pray be free in mentioning it, and in future your instructions shall be fully attended to. We have taken all the pains, and used all the caution in our power to render them unexceptionable; but you can better judge in some respects than we. If you should not approve of all (though we are not conscious of any thing that you will disapprove) you will not be offended, but believe we have done our best, and with your remarks, hope to do better still.

"With pleasure, approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a *little* leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the *whole* is leavened." Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on; God will do greater things than these. Jesus is worthy of a *world* of praise: and shall *Hindostan* not praise him? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul *there*, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the labourers in this important work; and blessed be *He* who giveth them hearts and strength to labour, and promises that they shall not labour in vain!

"Do not fear the want of money. *God* is for us, and the silver and the gold are his; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land's end to the Orkneys but we will get money enough for all the demands of the mission I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do

wonders; and past experience justifies every confidence. *Men*, we only want; and God shall find them for us in due time.

"Is brother Fountain arrived? We hope he will be an acceptable remittance, and, viva voce, compensate for the lack of epistolary communications.

"I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join it? Lord, help their unbelief! But perhaps the drop is now with held, that you may by and by have the shower, and lift up your eyes, and say, "These, whence came they? They fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows." For three years, we read of few baptized by the first disciples of our Lord; but on the fourth, three thousand, and five thousand openly avowed him. The Lord send *you* such another Pentecost!

"I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my *desire* to gratify him, if it do no more. I wish that I knew in what communications your other correspondents will be most deficient: then I would try to supply their omissions.

"I will begin with myself: but I have nothing good to say. I think I am the most vile, ungrateful servant, that ever Jesus Christ employed in his church. At some times, I question whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I hesitate on the most important points of Christian faith. I have lately had peculiar struggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to speak no more in the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God. In conversation I am obliged to be silent, lest my tongue should belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to say, and at times think prayer altogether useless. Yet I cannot wholly surrender my hope, or my profession. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preservation:— First, A recollection of a time, when, *at once*, I was brought to abandon the practice of sins which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquish before. Surely, I say, this must be the finger of God, according to the scripture doctrine of regeneration:—Secondly, I feel such a consciousness of guilt, that nothing but the gospel scheme can satisfy my mind respecting the hope

of salvation:—and, Thirdly, I see that what true devotion does appear in the world, seems only to be found amongst those to whom Christ is precious.

"But I frequently find a backwardness to secret prayer, and much deadness in it: and it puzzles me to see how this can be consistent with a life of grace. However, I resolve, that let what will become of me, I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the rest to him; and this I usually experience to be the best way to be at peace.

"I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I should be free from these distressing workings of mind; and then I long to be a Missionary where I should have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and lay myself entirely out for him. In such a situation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occasion for exercise; so that the spiritual life, and inward religion, would thrive better than they do now.

"At times, indeed, I do feel, I trust, genuine contrition, and sincerely lament my short-comings before God. Oh the sweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abased before God. 'There it is I find my blessing.' May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me so!

"As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labours are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable to the hearers: but what is this to me, if my own soul starves whilst others are fed by me? Oh, my brother, I need your prayers, and I feel a great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. Oh that I may be kept faithful unto death! Indeed, in the midst of my strugglings, a gleam of hope, that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God, affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with Christ is far better than to continue sinning here: but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, His will be done.

"I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you, and I think, if you were near me, I should feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject.

"It is not long since I returned from a kind of mission to *Ireland*. A society is established in Dublin for the purpose of inviting from England, ministers of various denominations, to assist in promoting the interests of the kingdom of Christ there. Some of our Baptist brethren had been there before me, as Rippon, Langdon, Francis, and Birt; and I think the plan is calculated for usefulness. I have at Dr. Rippon's request, sent him some remarks on my visit, for the Register; but as it is probable you will receive this before that comes to hand, I will say something of my excursion here.

"Having engaged to spend six Lord's days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the first Sabbath in June. I first made myself acquainted with the general state of religion in Dublin. I found there were four Presbyterian congregations; two of these belong to the southern presbytery, and are Arians or Socinians; the other two are connected with the northern presbytery, and retain the Westminster confession of faith. One of these latter congregations is very small, and the minister, though orthodox, appears to have but little success. The other is large and flourishing: the place of worship ninety feet by seventy, and, in a morning, well filled. Their times of public service are at half past eleven, and five. In the afternoon, the usual congregations are small indeed; for five o'clock is the dining hour in Dublin, and few of the hearers would leave their dinners for the gospel Dr. M'Dowal is the senior pastor of this church,—a very affectionate, spiritual man. The junior is Mr. Horner. The doctor is a warm friend to the Society, at whose request I went over to Ireland.

"There is one congregation of Burgher Seceders, and another of Antiburghers. The latter will not hear any man who is not of their own cast; the former are much more liberal. I preached for them once, and they affectionately solicited a repetition of my services.

"Lady Huntingdon's connexion has one society here, the only one in the kingdom, perhaps, except at Sligo, where there is another. It is not large, and I fear rather declining. There is not one Independent church in the kingdom. There were ten Baptist So-

cieties in Ireland : they are now reduced to six ; and are, I fear, still on the decline.

" The inhabitants of Dublin seem to be chiefly composed of two classes : the one assume the appearance of opulence ; the other exhibit marks of the most abject poverty ; and as there are no parishes in Ireland which provide for the poor, many die every year for want of the necessaries of life.

" Most of the rich are by profession protestants ; the poor are nearly all papists, and strongly prejudiced against the reformed religion. Their ignorance and superstition are scarcely inferior to your miserable Hindoos. On midsummer day I had an affecting proof of the latter. On the public road, about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precints of a priory, dedicated to St. John of Jerusalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints, and its virtues are said to be most efficacious on the saint's own day. So from twelve o'clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwise diseased people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old and young, and applied the " holy water," both internally and externally ; some by pouring, some by immersion, and all by drinking : whilst, for the good of those who could not come in person, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water to use at home. Several I saw on their knees before the well, at their devotions, who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glass of whiskey. With this they were supplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept standings all around the well.

" Near the spot, was a church-yard where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceased relatives, and appeared engaged in praying for the repose of their souls.

" It was truly a lamentable sight. My heart ached at their delusions, whilst I felt gratitude, I hope unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the ' water of life, of which, if a man drink, he shall live for ever !'

" There are few or none of the middle class to connect the rich and the poor, so that favourable access to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England · and

their priests hold them in such bondage, that if a catholic servant only attend on family worship in a protestant house, penance must be performed for the offence.

"S. P."

Mention has already been made of his having "formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the University of Dublin."* The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return.

"Dear Brother Matthias,

"I have been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apology. Let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which in other circumstances I ought to have presented three months ago. I thought this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose, I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain *all that communion*, which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends in propria persona, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But *the Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.* Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and re-

* P. 328.

ceive more of its light and heat, whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light : yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things may be affirmed of all :— all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun the longer are they in performing their revolutions : and is not this exemplified in us ? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives ; but, alas, we are all comets ; we all move in eccentric orbits : at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another freezing and congealing the icicles. 'Oh what a miracle to man is man !'

"Little did I think when I begun this letter, that I should have thus indulged myself in allegory : but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore ; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts, than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship ; and this, I think sometimes, makes even nonsense palatable.

"But I have some questions to put to you : first, how are all my college friends, Messrs Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c. ? How is their health ? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you ? Are any praying students added to your number ? Do all those you thought well of continue to justify their profession ? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep or rejoice.

"I hope Mr. H——'s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it ? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world. How is it with your own soul ? I thank God I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have of late. '*God is love.*' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns ; that he reigns over all ; that he reigns over *me ;* over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preach-

ing, my conduct; that he is *God over all*, blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without, all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be *angels* of light; all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal, and flaming with love. Oh for the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!

'O what love and concord there,
And what sweet harmony
In heaven above, where happy souls
Adore thy Majesty!
O how the heavenly choirs all sing
To Him who sits enthroned above:
What admiring!
And aspiring!
Still desiring:
O how I long to see this feast of love!'

"Will you tell brother M—— that I wait an opportunity to send a parcel to him? In that I will enclose a letter. My very affectionate respects to him, and Mr. H—, with all my college friends as though named. If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere you write to your unworthy, but affectionate brother in Christ,

"S. P."

A while after this, he thus writes to his friend Mr. Summers:

"December 1796. I rejoice that you have been supported under, and brought through your late trials. I do not wonder at it, for it is no more than God has *promised;* and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wonder to our own unbelief, that for one moment suspected God would not be as good as his word.

"I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought, that God hath engaged to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more. Alas! what should we know, if God had not condescended to teach us? Paul very justly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing of God, but the Spirit, and he to whom the Spirit revealeth him. Now the Spirit hath revealed God in the Bible, but to an unbeliever the Bible is a sealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an imposture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed; so that to reject the Bible is to immerse ourselves in darkness, and whilst professing to be wise, actually to become a fool; whereas, no sooner do we believe what the Spirit saith, than unto us is God revealed, and 'in his light do we see light.

"S. P."

To the above may be added a few extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in 1797 and 1798.

TO DR. RYLAND.

"March 1797.

"During the last three weeks, I have, at times, been very poorly, in colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other, till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint! I seem lately to feel a kind of *affection* for death. Methinks if it were visible, I could embrace it. 'Welcome herald, that bids the prisoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlasting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart.' To believe, to feel, to speak, to act, *exactly* as God will have me; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing short of this, can make my bliss complete. But *all this is mine.* Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth, of redeeming

love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.——My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings upon earth: the best is in reserve.

'No heart upon earth can conceive
The bliss that in heaven they share;
Then who this dark world would not leave,
And cheerfully die to be there!'

"Oh how full of love, and joy, and praise, shall we be when that happy state is ours! Well, yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come: Even so come, Lord Jesus! My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be

"Affectionately yours,

"S. P."

TO MR. CAVE.

On the falling away of some who had promised fair in religion.

———, 1797.

"I THANK you, my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more *Satan* opposes *Christ*, the more let *us* oppose *him*. He comes with great violence, because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline; his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then,

who strays from the camp, and, thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and secure the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow-soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

"I hope you have some causes for joy as well as grief. I trust though one, or two, or three fall, the tens and the twenties stand their ground. Oh do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in *you*. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more; to pray the harder; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong.

"S. P."

TO MR. BATES, AND MRS. BARNES,

Who had been burnt out of their residence.

"The many expressions of Christian friendship, which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my last visit to London, will often excite grateful recollections in future, as they have almost daily since I parted from you; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wish it to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favour you show to the servants of our common Lord, for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of Him who cannot lie shall be fulfilled,—'A cup of cold water

given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.'

"But, whilst you, my dear friends, live 'in hope of the glory' that remains 'to be revealed,' I am persuaded that you expect *all* as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if sinners be rewarded, it must be 'of grace, and not of debt.' Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a connexion between obedience and enjoyment; such a connexion as at once ensures joy to the believer, and glory to Christ.

"Oh that our thoughts, our affections, our desires, may be much in heaven! *Here*, you have been taught, is 'no continuing city,' no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes, my friends, 'in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:' the apartments there are more spacious; the society more sweet; the enjoyments more perfect; and all to last for ever. Well may Christians 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God!'

TO MR. AND MRS. BOWYER, PALL MALL.

"November 17, 1797.

"Blessed be 'the Preserver of men,' for all his goodness to dear Mr. and Mrs. B———. With theirs, shall my gratitude also ascend, whilst separated from their society; and with theirs, shall it more warmly and permanently ascend, when we meet to form a part of the 'general assembly, the church of the first-born.'

"I do not return to London this autumn, but I mean to visit Portsmouth. I must be indebted to you for my directions. We shall be very happy to see you at Luke-street: but *Wales* I suppose will be the vortex that will swallow up much of your time.

Well, so *you* are happy, we must be disinterested enough to be satisfied, although we be denied a personal participation.

"Let us not forget that we are Christians; and Christians profess a hope of a better country than *Cambria* contains. *There* we all belong. Already citizens by privilege, we shall be by possession soon.

> 'Roll swifter round, ye wheels of time,
> And bring the welcome day!'

"In hope of greeting you both in that good land, I remain most affectionately yours,

"S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"November 17, 1797.

"I FEEL much for you, in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation: at the same time I bless God, who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those whose hands are full of religious concerns can guess at your difficulties, yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. Oh, my dear brother, you are travailing for Him who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than *Christ*. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for Him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

"I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a Christian, and a minister I have never felt so deeply my need of a Divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to

renounce my own wisdom, power, and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. Oh my Saviour! make me 'meek and lowly in heart; in this alone I find 'rest to my soul.'

"I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord! Oh welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ. To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour. Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him!

"You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable characters, are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work!

"S. P."

TO MRS. PEARCE.

On the dangerous illness of one of the children.

'Portsmouth, January 29, 1793.

"IGNORANT of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother! With a fluttering heart and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquillizes my mind,—I and mine are in the hands of *God:* the wise, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind! Whatever *he* does is best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, 'Thy will be done.'

"I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller; and, except my dear Sarah's presence, feel myself at home. *They* have had greater trials than *we* can at present know. They have attended *seven* children to the gloomy tomb: they have been supported beneath their loss, by Him who hath said, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' Mrs. S. tells me, she 'blessed God for

all.' May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you ; yet, lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O that it may prove in some degree a messenger of consolation !

" Yesterday I preached three times : God was very good. I received your letter before the first service : you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours ; nor shall I pray in vain : He will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any *earthly good ;* for ' who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow ?' But *strength* to bear the loss of earthly comforts, he has *promised :* for *that* I importune ; and *that*, I doubt not, will be granted.

" In a house directly opposite to the window before which I now write, a *wife*, a *mother*, is just departed ! Why am I not a bereaved husband ? Why not my children motherless ? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain : but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints would be exchanged for gratitude and praise.

" S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

" February 14, 1793.

" Not a day has hurried by, since I parted with my dear friends in Pall Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance ; but not being able to speak with any satisfaction respecting our dear child, I have withheld myself from imparting new anxieties to bosoms already alive to painful sensibility.

" At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to say, that there is hope. After languishing between life and death for many days, she now seems to amend. We flatter ourselves that

she has passed the crisis, and will yet be restored to our arms; but parental fears forbid too strong a confidence. It may be that our most merciful God saw that the shock of a sudden removal would be too strong for the tender feelings of a mother; and so by degrees, prepares for the stroke which must fall at last. However, she is in the best hands, and we are, I hope, preparing for submission to what ever may be the blessed will of God.

"I was brought home in safety, and feel myself in much better health in consequence of my journey. Oh that it may be all consecrated to my Redeemer's praise!

"Happy should I be, if I could oftener enjoy your friendly society; but we must wait for the full accomplishment of our social wishes, till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us:—*There* our best, our brightest hopes, and there our warmest affections must be found. Could we have all we want below, we should be reluctant to ascend, when Jesus calls us home. No, this is not our rest; it is polluted with sin, and dashed with sorrow: but though our pains in themselves are evil, yet our God turns the curse into a blessing, and makes all that we meet with accomplish our good.

"What better can I wish, my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy rest of John! Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his bosom, when we see him as he is.

'Oh the delights, the heavenly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace!'

"S. P."

LINES,

WRITTEN ON THE WORDS OF IGNATIUS,—

*"My Love is crucified."**

MEUM DESIDERUM CRUCIFIXUM EST.

"Warm was his heart, his faith was strong,
Who thus in rapture cried,
When on his way to martyrdom,
My Love is crucified.

Warm also be my love for Him,
Who thus for sinners died;
Long as I live be this my theme,
My Love is crucified.

Come, oh my soul, behold him pierced
In hands, and feet, and side;
And say, while he's in blood immersed,
My Love is crucified.

What lover ere to win my heart,
So much has done beside?
To him I'll cleave, and never part;
My Love is crucified.

Oh that in Jesus' wounds, my soul
Secure, may ever hide,
And sing, as changing seasons roll,
My Love is crucified.

* When *Ignatius*, pastor of the church at Antioch, was condemned by the emperor Trajan to suffer death at Rome, he was apprehensive that the Christians there, out of their great affection for him, might endeavour to prevent his martyrdom; and therefore wrote a letter from Smyrna to the Roman Christians, which he sent on before him, wherein he earnestly beseeches them to take no measures for the continuance of his life; and amongst other things says, "I long for death," adding as a reason why he was desirous of thus testifying his love to Christ, "My Love is crucified."

In seasons oft, when bow'd with fear,
My trembling heart has sigh'd,
This thought again brings comfort near.
My Love is crucified.

To what a test his love was put,
When by his suff'rings tried!
But faithful to the end endured;
My Love is crucified.

His garments white as wintry snows,
In crimson floods were died;
Hence spring the blessings he bestows;
My Love is crucified.

Down from his wounded body flow'd
The all-atoning tide,
Which peace restored 'twixt me and God:
My Love is crucified.

Now, by the cross, is hell subdued,
And all its powers defied;
It yields to Jesus' conqu'ring blood;
My Love is crucified.

Ne'er may my dear despised Lord
By me be once denied;
My joy, my crown, my boast be this,
My Love is crucified.

Dead be my heart to all below,
In Christ may I abide;
Why should I love the creature so?
My Love is crucified.

Shameful his death, oh let it slay
In me all cursed pride;
Lowly in Jesus, may I say,
My Love is crucified.

When first my soul, by living faith,
My bleeding Lord espied,
My lips declared, at every breath,
My Love is crucified.

And since my happy heart has known
His sacred blood applied,
This still has been my sweetest song,
My Love is crucified.

And whilst upon this world I stay,
Whate'er may me betide,
To all around I'll ever say,
My Love is crucified.

When through death's gloomy vale I walk,
My Lord shall be my guide;
To him I'll sing, of him I'll talk,
My Love is crucified.

Could I, his praise e'en now I'd sound,
As vast creation wide;
But I shall sing on heavenly ground,
My Love is crucified.

Yes, when to that blest land I mount,
On places high to ride,
Through all eternity I'll shout,
My Love is crucified!

Jan. 19, 1795. S. P.

"THE GARDENER AND ROSE-TREE,"

"A FABLE,"

"*Affectionately addressed to Mrs. J. H——, on the death of her child, by her truly sympathizing friend,* "*S. P.*"

March 12, 1798.

"In a sweet spot, which Wisdom chose,
Grew a unique and lovely Rose;
A flower so fair was seldom borne—
A Rose almost without a thorn

Each passing stranger stopp'd to view
A plant possessing charms so new:
"*Sweet Flower*!" each lip was heard to say—
Nor less the Owner pleased than they:
Rear'd by his hand with constant care,
And planted in his choice parterre,
Of all his garden this the pride,
No flower so much admired beside.

Nor did the Rosé unconscious bloom,
Nor feel ungrateful for the boon;
Oft as her guardian came that way,
Whether at dawn, or eve of day,
Expanded wide—her form unveil'd,
She *double fragrance* then exhaled.

As months roll'd on, the spring appear'd,
Its genial rays the Rose matured;
Forth from its root a *shoot* extends—
The parent Rose-tree downward bends,
And, with a joy unknown before,
Contemplates the yet embryo flow'r.

'Offspring most dear, (she fondly said,)
Part of myself! beneath my shade,
Safe shalt thou rise, whilst happy I,
Transported with maternal joy,
Shall see thy little buds appear,
Unfold, and bloom in beauty here.
What though the Lily, or Jonquil,
Or Hyacinth no longer fill
The space around me—*All* shall be
Abundantly made up in *thee*.

'What though my present charms decay,
And passing strangers no more say
Of *me*, 'Sweet flower!'—Yet *thou* shalt raise
Thy blooming head, and gain the praise;
And this reverberated pleasure
Shall be to me a world of treasure.
Cheerful I part with former merit,
That it my darling may inherit,

Haste then the hours which bid thee bloom,
And fill the zephyrs with perfume!'

Thus had the Rose-tree scarcely spoken,
Ere the sweet cup of bliss was broken—
The Gard'ner came, and with one stroke
He from the root the offspring took;
Took from the soil wherein it grew,
And hid it from the parent's view.

Judge ye, who know a mother's cares
For the dear tender babe she bears,
The parent's anguish—ye alone
Such sad vicissitudes have known.

Deep was the wound; nor slight the pain
Which made the Rose-tree thus complain:

'Dear little darling! art thou gone—
Thy charms scarce to thy mother known?
Remov'd so soon!—So suddenly,
Snatch'd from my fond maternal eye!
What hadst thou done?—dear offspring! say,
So *early* to be snatch'd away!
What! gone for *ever*!—seen *no more*!
For *ever* I thy loss deplore.
Ye dews descend, with tears supply
My now for ever tearful eye;
Or rather come some *northern blast*,
Dislodge my yielding roots in haste.
Whirlwinds arise—my branches tear,
And to some distant region bear
Far from this spot, a wretched mother,
Whose fruit and joys are gone together.'

As thus the anguish'd Rose-tree cried,
Her Owner near her she espied;
Who in these gentle terms reproved
A plant, though murm'ring, still beloved:

'Cease, beauteous flower, these useless cries.
And let my lessons make thee wise.
Art thou not mine? Did not my hand
Transplant thee from the barren sand,
Where once a mean unsightly plant,
Exposed to injury and want,
Unknown, and unadmir'd I found,
And brought thee to this fertile ground;
With studious art improved thy form,
Secured thee from th' inclement storm,
And through the seasons of the year,
Made thee my unabating care?
Hast thou not blest thy happy lot,
In such an Owner, such a spot?
But now, because thy shoot I've taken,
Thy best of friends must be forsaken.
Know, flower beloved, e'en this affliction
Shall prove to thee a benediction:
Had I not the young plant removed,
(So fondly by thy heart beloved,)
Of me thy heart would scarce have thought,
With gratitude no more be fraught:
—Yea—thy own beauty be at stake
Surrender'd for thy offspring's sake.
Nor think, that, hidden from thine eyes,
The infant plant *neglected* lies—
No—I've *another garden*, where
In richer soil and purer air
It's now transplanted, there to shine
In beauties fairer far than thine.

'Nor shalt thou always be apart
From the dear darling of thy heart;
For 'tis my purpose *thee* to bear
In future time, and plant thee there,
Where thy now absent off-set grows,
And blossoms a CELESTIAL *Rose*.
Be patient, then, till that set hour shall come,
When thou and thine shall in new beauties bloom:

No more its absence shalt thou then deplore,
Together grow, and ne'er be parted more.'

These words to silence hush'd the plaintive Rose,
With deeper blushes redd'ning now she glows,
Submissive bow'd her unrepining head,
Again her wonted, grateful fragrance shed—
Cried, 'Thou hast taken only what's thine own,
Therefore thy will, my Lord, not mine, be done.'

CHAPTER IV.

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST AFFLICTION, AND THE HOLY AND HAPPY EXERCISES OF HIS MIND UNDER IT.

Early in October 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering ministers' meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.* He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of a holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardour. On his return, he preached at Market Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend Mr. Summers of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chilliness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4, 1798, and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1798. In the former, he says,—"Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission

business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's day, which, as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering ministers' meeting has affected me so much, that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath, and in the pulpit it is labour and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a Lord's day, till the last, when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labour as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night."—— In the letter, he thus writes——"Should my life be spared, I, and my family, and all my connexions, will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B—— (the apothecary) to me, and then first I learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of—*that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle.* And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me!"

Such were his ideas. His labours were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health, than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce, the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of Jesus Christ: but now we see him laid aside from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.

TO DR. RYLAND.

"Birmingham, Oct. 8, 1798.

"Oh! my dear brother, your letter of the 5th, which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all *my pulpit agonies*, as they enabled me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects; particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardour, in which I have found the most effectual relief; so that on the whole, I must try to 'glory in tribulations also.' I trust I often can when the conflict is past, but to glory '*in*' them, especially in mental distress—hic labor, hoc opus est.

"But how often has it been found, that when ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed, the most effectual good has been done to the people. Oh for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God!

"How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother, who is tried in these points, as I of late have been.

"S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

"Birmingham, Nov. 13, 1798.

"I CAUGHT a violent cold in returning from our last committee-meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labour proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long. I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence, which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. * * * * * * Trials soften our hearts, and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I could bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruits than these,—the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they enjoy. Pray, my dear brother, for yours affectionately,

"S. P."

To a young man who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol Academy:

"Birmingham, Nov. 13, 1798.

"MY DEAR M——,

"I CAN only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I was sensible it deserved some consideration before it was answered. I was full of business at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late. The time of your going to Bristol draws nigh. If, instead of an

opinion respecting the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

"At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct: First, I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety, connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope, be never lost; and I am sure that without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end. —Secondly, I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure. If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the Society on condition of conforming to its will; and it is the Society's will that my tutor shall govern me. My example will have influence: let me not, by a single act of disobedience, or by a word that implicates dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosom of my companions.—Thirdly, I would pray and strive for the power of *self-government*, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step, under the mere influence of passion. Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty.—Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits, observe the strictest *order*. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuit; from which let nothing, but a settled conviction that I can employ it to a better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading, languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c.—Fifthly, I would not

only assign to every hour its proper pursuit ; but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first.—Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a *versatile habit.* In all things I would persevere. Without this I may be a gaudy butterfly, but never, like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

"To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much.—*Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student.* Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour.—*Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for an hour in a week for experimental conversation, and mutual prayer.* I found this highly beneficial, though strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice!—*Keep a diary.* Once a week, at farthest, call yourself to an account: What advances you have made in your different studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement ; and amidst all, do no not forget to inquire, Am I more fit to *serve* and to *enjoy* God than I was last week ?

"S. P."

On December 2, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Dan. x. 19. *Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me.*——"Amongst all the Old Testament saints," said he, in his introduction to that discourse, "there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of

him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtless no one was further from his thoughts than himself: several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

TO MR. CAVE, LEICESTER.

"Birmingham, Dec. 4, 1798.

"——— BLESSED be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Peace from our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with your affectionate brother,

"S. P."

December 9, 1798, he was detained from public worship, and wrote to Dr. Ryland the first of the letters which appear at the close of his funeral sermon. The following lines seem to have been composed on the same occasion:

"*On being prevented by Sickness from attending on Public Worship.*

"The fabric of nature is fair,
But fairer the temple of grace;
To saints 'tis the joy of the earth—
Oh glorious, beautiful place!

To this temple I once did resort,
With crowds of the people of God;
Enraptured, we enter'd its courts,
And hail'd the Redeemer's abode.

The Father of Nature we praised,
And prostrated low at his throne;
The Saviour *we loved* and adored,
Who *loved us* and made us his own.

Full oft to the message of peace,
To sinners address'd from the sky,
We listen'd, extolling that grace,
Which set us, once rebels, on high.

Faith clave to the crucified Lamb;
Hope, smiling, exalted its head;
Love warm'd at the Saviour's dear name,
And vow'd to observe what he said.

What pleasure appear'd in the looks,
Of brethren and sisters around;
With transport all seem'd to reflect
On the blessings in Jesus they'd found.

Sweet moments! If aught upon earth
Resemble the joys of the skies,
'Tis thus when the hearts of the flock
Conjoin'd to the Shepherd arise.

But ah! these sweet moments are fled,
Pale sickness compels me to stay
Where no voice of the turtle is heard,
As the moments are hasting away.

My God! thou art holy and good,
Thy plans are all righteous and wise;
Oh help me submissive to wait,
Till thou biddest thy servant arise.

If to follow thee here in thy courts,
May it be with all ardour and zeal,
With success and increasing delight,
Performing the whole of thy will.

Or shouldst thou in bondage detain,
To visit thy temples no more,
Prepare me for mansions above,
Where nothing exists to deplore!

Where Jesus, the Sun of the place,
Refulgent incessantly shines,
Eternally blessing his saints,
And pouring delight on their minds.

There—there are no prisons to hold
The captive from tasting delight;
There—there the day never is closed
With shadows, or darkness, or night.

There myriads and myriads shall meet,
In our Saviour's high praises to join;
Whilst transported we fall at his feet,
And extol his redemption divine.

Enough then! my heart shall no more
Of its present bereavements complain;
Since, ere long, I to glory shall soar,
And ceaseless enjoyments attain!"

TO MR. NICHOLS, NOTTINGHAM.

"Birmingham, Dec. 10, 1798.

"I AM now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my internal strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne—to the throne of glory. Yes indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail; and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doth all things well.

"S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"——— I HAVE overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to *converse*, without great care; nor indeed till to-day have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted to the skies. Oh, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am *bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* To him be all the praise! Truly I have proved that God is faithful: and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published.*

"S. P."

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES, MINORIES.

"Birmingham, Dec. 14, 1798.

"——— I COULD tell you much of the Lord's goodness during my affliction. Truly 'his right hand hath been under my head, and his left embraced me.' And when I was at the worst, especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even *then*, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness, filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

* The last but one he ever preached, entitled, MOTIVES TO GRATITUDE. It was delivered on the day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

"Oh, my dear friends, let us live to *Christ*, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live; and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.

"S. P."

About this time, the congregation at Cannon-street was supplied for several months by Mr. Ward, who is since gone as a missionary to India: here that amiable young man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated Jan. 5, 1799, he writes as follows:

"I am happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him, than in any other person I ever knew. Oh how happy should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preached three times on a Lord's day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a year to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for visiting the afflicted in general: a Book Society at chapel: a Lord's day School, at which betwixt two and three hundred children are instructed. Add to this, missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of mission history preparing for the press, &c.; and then you will see something of the soul of Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour.

"W. W."

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting-house at Bedworth; but did not engage in any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of these memoirs, he says,—"The Lord's day after I came home, I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. Well, the Lord's will be done. I thank him that ever he took me into his service; and now, if he see fit to give me a discharge, I submit."

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren which he took as a reflection, though nothing was further from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind, and in a few days after, he wrote as follows:—"Do you remember what passed at B——? Had I not been accustomed to receive *plain, friendly* remarks from you, I should have thought that you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken, since affectionate explanations are necessary when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship; and I need not say that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account."

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a case wherein he felt himself aggrieved, but to show in how easy and amiable a manner thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

TO MR. COMFIELD, NORTHAMPTON.

"Birmingham, March 4, 1799.

"I COULD wish my sympathies to be as extensive as human—I was going to say—(and why not?) as animal misery. The very limited comprehension of the human intelligence forbids this

indeed, and whilst I am attempting to participate as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the same events do not often produce equal feelings. We measure our sympathies, not by the causes of sorrow, but by the sensibilities of the sorrowful; hence I abound in feeling on *your* account. The situation of your family must have given distress to a president of any character; but in you it must have produced agonies. I know the tenderness of your heart: your feelings are delicately strong. You must feel much, or nothing; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel, must be a brute.

"May the Fountain of mercy supply you with the cheering stream! May your sorrow be turned into joy!

"I am sure that I ought to value more than ever your friendship for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own. Our friendship, our benevolence, must never be compared with that of Jesus; but it is truly delightful to see the disciple treading, though at a humble distance, in the footsteps of a Master, who, amidst the tortures of crucifixion, exercised forgiveness to his murderers, and the tenderness of filial piety to a disconsolate mother! When we realize the scene, How much do our imaginations embrace—the persons—the circumstances—the words—'Woman, behold thy Son; John, behold thy mother!'

"S. P."

By the above letter, the reader will perceive, that while deeply afflicted himself, he felt in the tenderest manner for the afflictions of others.

TO MR. FULLER.

March 23, 1799.

He was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a con-

sumption, he adds,—" but thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed, or preserved. In the thought of *leaving*, I feel a momentary gloom ; but in the thought of *going*, a heavenly triumph.

' Oh to grace how great a debtor !'

" Praise God with me, and for me, my dear brother, and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No, no ; let every Christian sing the loudest, as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God.—Eternally yours in Him, who hath washed us both in his blood.

" S. P."

TO MR. MEDLEY, LONDON.

Under the same date, he says,—" My affliction has been rendered sweet, by the supports and smiles of Him whom I have served in the gospel of his Son. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. Oh what shall I render to the Lord !"

It seems that in order to avoid wounding Mrs. P.'s feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol ; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. Receiving a favourable answer, he replied as follows :—

" Bristol, April 6, 1799.

" Your letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings both of sympathy and gratitude, to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service,

which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care! But may the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, send you a recompense into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and reposing on whose bosom, even death itself loses part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father—in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities; and your prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough—blessed God! My soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend.

"S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

"Plymouth, April 18, 1799.

"THE last time that I wrote to you was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that postscript form; it looked so cardlike as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from my weakness, which seems to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in great measure, is no more than the love of 'publicans and harlots, who love those that love them.' I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees so interested in the regards of my friends, as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any 'reward' for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude, were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feeling, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves

to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

" I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers, at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account, or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms!

" For the sake of others, I should be happy, could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God, that I am not without a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness nor in health, I can be so much as I wish like Him whom I love. ' To die is gain :' Oh to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this ; and to gain this, most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual of my fellow-men,—Lord, let thy will be done ; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death!

" The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better ; and I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Professional men encourage me ; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor ; so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

" I thank you for yours of April 4th, which I did not receive till the 12th, the day that I arrived at Plymouth. On the 16th, a copy of yours to brother Ryland came to hand, to which I should have replied yesterday, but had not leisure. I am happy and thankful for your success. May the Lord himself pilot the *Criterion* safely to Calcutta river!

" Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a

severe anticipation ; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God ?

"S. P."

TO MR. WM. WARD.

" Plymouth, April 22, 1799.

" Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again ; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here ? Oh, had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he ensures me grace—why should I regret the delay of glory ! No : I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

" My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done.

" Alas ! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death ; but the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season.

Ever yours,

" S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"Plymouth, April 24, 1799.

"VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"My health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my muscular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have, for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to-day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter *one word*, and one word *only*, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness which I expect to feel till bed-time.

"I am still looking out for fine weather: all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days since I have been here: then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loss even to guess what the Lord means to do with me; but I desire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country, (to Tamerton,) where I shall await the will of the Lord concerning me.

"I knew not of any Committee meeting of our Society to be held respecting Mr. Marshman and his wife. I have therefore sent no vote, and indeed it is my happiness that I have full confidence in my brethren at this important crisis, since close thinking or much writing always increases my fever, and promotes my complaint.

"My dear brother, I hope you will correspond much with Kettering. I used to be a medium, but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can serve him no more; and yet I fear some would be tears of pride. Oh, for perfect likeness to my humble Lord!

"S. P."

TO MR. KING.

"Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

"————Give my love to all the dear people at Cannon-street. Oh pray that He who afflicts, would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, 'Oh, my dear people! Oh, my dear family! When shall I be restored to you again!' The Lord forgive all the sin of my desires! At times I feel a sweet and perfect calm, and wish ever to live under the influence of a belief in the *goodness* of God, and of all his plans, and all his works.

"S. P."

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designation of the missionaries at Olney. He however addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears:

"Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

"————Oh that the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each missionary who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! happy women! you are going to be fellow-labourers with Christ himself! I congratulate—I almost envy you: yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what a reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations, at the arrival of each missionary there. Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they left,

methinks 'mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord.

"S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"Plymouth, May 14, 1799.

"My dear Brother,

"Yours of the 11th instant I have just received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

"I have suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last, by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak, and now that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be without his divine atonement, wherein to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death has lost its sting, the grave its horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate

"S. P."

TO THE CHURCH IN CANNON-STREET.

"Plymouth, May 31, 1799.

"To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon-street, Birmingham; their afflicted but affec

tionate Pastor presents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

"My dearest, dearest Friends and Brethren,

"Separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation, having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory, to which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and *for* which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

"Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day—this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which for ten years I have now preached among you: the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel of free, full, everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of *God manifest in the flesh.* Look much at this all-amazing scene!

'Behold! a God descends and dies,
To save my soul from gaping hell;'

And then say whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus 'mighty to save,' hath said, that 'whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.' You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed. The only way to be constantly happy, and

constantly prepared for the most awful changes which we must all experience, is to be constantly *looking* and *coming* to a dying Saviour: renouncing all our own worthiness; cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable, to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ; begging that of his fullness we may receive 'grace upon grace;' whilst our faith actually *relies* on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might for a moment bring distance and darkness between your souls and your precious Lord. If you *thus live*, (and oh that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ so to do!) 'the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,' and you will be filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"As a *Church*, you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late for the honour and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all, I should be taken entirely from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you, nor forsake you.

"As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often, both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord's will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands; and all must be right.

"I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately, for all the kindness you have shown, respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousandfold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as 'the horses in Pharaoh's chariot.' I pray much for you: pray, still pray, for your very affectionate, though unworthy pastor, "S. P."

In a postscript to Mr. King he says, "I have made an effort to write this letter: my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever."

It seems to have been about this time that he wrote the following lines, which have appeared in several periodical publications, but with many inaccuracies:

HYMN IN A STORM.

"In the floods of tribulation,
While the billows o'er me roll,
Jesus whispers consolation,
And supports my fainting soul.
Thus the lion yields me honey,
From the eater food is given;
Strengthen'd thus, I still press forward,
Singing, as I wade to heaven,—
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!
That brings Jesus to my soul!

'Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings
With increased brightness play;
'Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flow'rets
Look more beautiful and gay:
So, in darkest dispensations,
Doth my faithful Lord appear,
With his richest consolations,
To re-animate and cheer.
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!
Thus to bring my Saviour near!

Floods of tribulation heighten,
Billows still around me roar;
Those that know not Christ, ye frighten;
But my soul defies your power.
In the sacred page recorded,
Thus his word securely stands,—

"Fear not, I'm in trouble near thee,
Nought shall pluck thee from my hands."
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction!
That to such sweet words lays claim!

All I meet, I find assists me
In my path to heavenly joy,
Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy:
Wearing there a weight of glory,
Still the path I'll ne'er forget;
But, reflecting how it led me
To my blessed Saviour's seat.
Cry, affliction! sweet affliction!
Haste! bring more to Jesus' feet!

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. WARD and his companions were just ready to set sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the *Criterion*, in which all the missionaries, and some of the Baptist Missionary Society, were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a *History of Missions*, to be comprised in two volumes octavo: and as the sending of the gospel among the heathens had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, Could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great interest which the author justly possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the

members of the Society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finished by another hand; desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere Christian, that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:

"Tamerton, June 24, 1799.

"To use the common introduction of 'dear brother,' would fall so far short of my feelings towards a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness,—kindness in *adversity*—kindness to my *wife*—kindness to my *children*——kindness that would go far to 'smooth the bed of death,' has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin. . . . 'Thought is poor, and poor expression:' The *only* thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparitively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the *all* that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life,—with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but *these alone* I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, 'cold' as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and, on my account,

for mine ; yet after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children among the crowds of the needy and distressed.—It was at this moment of painful sensibility that *your heart* meditated a plan to remove my anxieties ;—a plan too that would involve much personal labour before it could be accomplished. 'Blessed be God, who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.' May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen and amen !

"You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself, but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then on the one hand, that I have said so much, and accept on the other what remains unexpressed.

"My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham ; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages, may do me good ; if not, I expect when the winter comes, to sleep in peace ; and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter ; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

"Rejoice with me, that the blessed gospel still 'bears my spirits up.' I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often of the world ; and thanks be to God, I do it *always* with *tranquillity*, and *often* with *rapture*. Oh, what grace, what grace it was, that ever called me to be a Christian ! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet God with all the filth and load of my sin about me ! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. Oh, my dear brother, how consonant is *everlasting praise* with such a great salvation !"

"S. P."

After this, another letter was addressed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:

"Plymouth, July 6, 1799.

"I NEED not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

"I cannot direct Mr. K—— to *all* my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any friend to realize your kind intentions.

"I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history; read the necessary books; reflected; arranged; written perhaps the introduction; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head,—my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause: and, as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh my memory.

"It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propose setting out on our return. May the Lord prosper our way! Accept the sincere affection, and the ten thousand thanks, of your brother in the Lord,

"S. P."

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that, which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

TO MR. BIRT.

" Birmingham, July 26, 1799.

" It is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to *you*. Your name brings so many interesting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection,—an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

" We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We staid with Bristol friends till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on, till the uncommonly rough road from Tewkesbury to Evesham quite jaded me ; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half, and through the abundant goodness of God, we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

" I feel an undisturbed tranquillity of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain ; and of this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at *me*, and then at the *children*, and at length bathe her face in tears,

without my being able to say the kind word of comfort,——Oh! ' . . . . . Yet the Lord supports me under this also; and I trust will support me to the end.

"S. P."

TO MR. ROCK.

July 28, 1799.

"————I AM now to all appearance within a few steps of eternity. In Christ I am safe. In him I am happy. I trust we shall meet in heaven.

"S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"Birmingham, August 1, 1799.

"MUCH disappointed that I am not released from this world of sin, and put in possession of the pleasures enjoyed by the spirits of just men made perfect, I once more address my dear fellow-heirs of that glory which ere long shall be revealed to us all.

"We returned from Devon last Friday week. I was exceedingly weak, and for several days afterwards got rapidly worse. My friends compelled me to try another physician. I am still told that I shall recover. Be that as it may, I wish to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the *Lord* may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been, and still am happy in my soul; and I trust my prevailing desire is, that living or dying I may be the Lord's.

"S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

On his having sent him a print of Mr. SCHWARTZ, *the Missionary on the Malabar coast.*

"Birmingham, August 16, 1799.

"On three accounts was your last parcel highly acceptable. It represented a man, whom I have long been in the habit of loving and revering; and whose character and labours I intended, if the Lord had not laid his hand upon me by my present illness, to have presented to the public in Europe, as he himself presented them to the millions of Asia. The execution bearing so strong a likeness to the original, heightened its value. And then the hand from whence it came, and the friendship it was intended to express, add to its worth.

"S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

"Birmingham, August 19, 1799.

"The doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery: but to-day he has seen fit to alter his plans; and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all physicians, but Him, who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

"For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive, and then thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

"Since then, I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are

greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust, prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, Oh let him give me the patience of hope, and still, his will be done.—I can write no more. This is a whole day's work; for it is only after tea that for a few minutes I can sit up, and attend to any thing.

"S. P."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September to the tenth of October, *the day on which he died*, he seems to have been unable to write.—He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life were distinguished.

Four excellent letters, addressed to Dr. Ryland, Mr. Pope, and Mr. King, appear at the end of his funeral sermon, published by Dr. Ryland, together with various short sentences, which he dropped during the last five or six weeks of his life. And as the readers of the Sermon will probably wish to have it bound up with the Memoirs, both are connected together for that purpose.

A little before he died, he was visited by Mr. Medley, of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this, he spoke, or rather whispered as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me: it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counter-

balanced with joy. You have lost your pious father: tell me how it was."—Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words,—"Home, Home!" Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God. "Keep close to God," said he, "and nothing will hurt you!"

The following familiar compositions, which were found amongst Mr. Pearce's papers, appear to have been written at distant intervals:—

'*Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*' 1 Cor. i. 2.

"Sweet are the gifts which gracious Heaven
On true believers pours;
But the best gift is grace to know,
That Jesus Christ is *ours.*

Our Jesus! what rich drops of bliss
Descend in copious showers,
When ruin'd sinners, such as we,
By faith can call him *ours.*

Differ we may in age and state,
Learning and mental powers,
But all the saints may join and shout,
Dear Jesus! thou art *ours.*

Let those who know our Jesus not,
Delight in earth's gay flowers;
We, glorying in our better lot,
Rejoice that He is *ours.*

When hope, with elevated flight,
Towards heaven in rapture towers,
'Tis this supports our vent'rous wing,
We know that Christ is *ours*.

Though Providence, with dark'ning sky,
On things terrestrial lowers,
We rise superior to the gloom
When singing, Christ is *ours*.

Time, which this world, with all its joys,
With eager haste devours,
May take inferior things away,
But Jesus still is *ours*.

Haste then, dull time, and terminate
Thy slow revolving hours;
We wish, we pray, we long, we pant,
In heaven to call Him OURS!"

"*Plain Dealing with a Backsliding Heart.*"

"STUPID soul, to folly cleaving,
Why has God no more thy heart;
Why art thou thy mercies leaving;
Why must thou with Jesus part?

Is there in this world existing
Aught with Jesus to compare;
Yea, can heaven itself produce one
Half so lovely, half so fair?

Ah! look back upon the season,
When thy soul the Saviour chose
For thy portion, and thy spirit
Did with his salvation close:

Ah! remember thine espousals;
Didst thou not with Christ agree,
Leaving all thy former lovers,
His, and his alone to be?

In his love thy powers exulting,
What did all below appear;
Was there aught seemed worth possessing,
Worthy of a hope or fear?

When thy heart, by grace instructed,
Learn'd the world to disesteem,
And to Christ for all resorted,
Was there not enough in him?

Yes; thou know'st thy joyful spirit
Knew no unfulfill'd desire;
Longing still, and still receiving
Fuel for the heavenly fire.

Why then, tell me, now so lifeless,
Why this heavenly fountain leave;
Why to broken cisterns seeking,
Cisterns that no water give?

Doth not disappointment follow
Every step that leads from God;
Have not piercing thorns and briers
Shown their points through all the road?

Recollect, 'tis thus, the Saviour
Says he will thy soul reclaim,
With weeping and with supplication,
Humbly offer'd through his name."

"*Invocation to returning Peace.*"

"Sweet Peace, return! thy wonted bliss restore,
Bid war's insatiate scourge prevail no more;
Sheath the dread sword that deals destruction round,
And every ear salute with tranquil sound!
Oh! bid oppression from each land retire,
And Britain's sons with halcyon bliss inspire;
Remove the misery of domestic woes,
And hush the tumult of contending foes!
Let each, with patriot zeal, *all* strife disown;
Be one their wishes, and their motives *one*!
The widow's tears, her sad corroding care,
The orphan's sighs, assist this ardent prayer:
May he on whom propitious fortune smiles,
Relieve that breast which adverse fate beguiles!
May virtue's impulse every purpose move,
To acts of goodness, UNIVERSAL LOVE!

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF HIS CHARACTER.

To develop the character of any person, it is necessary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly ascertained, we shall easily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was Holy Love.

To mention this, is sufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to *that disciple whom Jesus loved.* His religion was that of the heart. Almost every thing he saw, or heard, or read, or studied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every subject that passed through his hands, seemed to have been cast into this mould. Things that to a merely speculative mind would have furnished matter only for curiosity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His sermons were generally the effusions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the justness of the above remarks, I might appeal not only to the letters which he addressed to his friends, but to those which his friends addressed to him. It is worthy of notice how much we are influenced in our correspondence by the turn of mind of the person we address. If we write to a humorous character, we shall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conscious of it, will be interspersed with pleasantries: or if to one of a very serious cast, our letters will be more serious than usual. On this principle, it has been thought, we may form some judgment of our own spirit by the spirit in which our friends address

us. These remarks will apply with singular propriety to the correspondence of Mr. Pearce. In looking over the first volume of *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission*, the reader will easily perceive the most affectionate letters from the missionaries are those which are addressed to him.

It is not enough to say of this affectionate spirit that it formed a prominent feature in his character: it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole system. He seemed, as one of his friends observed, to be baptized in it. It was *holy love* that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a son, a subject, a neighbour, a Christian, a minister, a pastor, a friend, a husband, and a father, he was manifestly governed by this principle; and this it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character, which constitutes the true *beauty of holiness.*

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honour of grace, and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the subject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to depart, that he might be freed from it: but certainly we have seldom seen a character, taking him altogether, "whose excellencies were so many, and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few." We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action—We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candour degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm, and what is called rational religion void of every thing that interests the heart of man—We have seen splendid talents tarnished with insufferable pride, seriousness with melancholy, cheerfulness with levity, and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree: but we have not seen these things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active; holy zeal, and genuine candour; spirituality, and rationality; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and the most unaffected modesty; faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing

boisterous, noisy, or overbearing; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest; not *breaking the bruised reed*, nor *quenching the smoking flax.*

He loved the divine character as revealed in the Scriptures.—To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favour, and to submit to his disposal, were his highest delight.

"I felt," says he, when contemplating the hardships of a missionary life, "that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it besides God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men; in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace, and exalted joy. Yes, O my God! thou hast taught me that THOU ALONE art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all solicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach my honour, and fatigue my rest!"

He loved the gospel.—The truths which he believed and taught dwelt richly in him, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of Christianity, examining the grounds on which he rested, in the first of those days which he devoted to solemn fasting and prayer in reference to his becoming a missionary;* and with what ardent affection he set his seal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If salvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of estimating characters, had a fairer claim: but, as he himself has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armour.† So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the less he thought of it in such a way. "All the satisfaction I wish for here," says he, "is to be doing my heavenly Father's will. I hope I have found it my meat and drink to do his work; and can set to my seal, that the purest pleasures of human life spring from the humble obedience

* See Chap. II. p. 310. † Chap. I. p. 285.

of faith. It is a good saying, 'We cannot do too much for God, nor trust in what we do too little.' I find a growing conviction of the necessity of a free salvation. The more I do for God, the less I think of it; and am progressively ashamed that I do no more."

Christ crucified was his darling theme, from first to last. This was the subject on which he dwelt at the outset of his ministry among the Coldford colliers, when, "He could scarcely speak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting sighs and sobs;" this was the burden of the song when addressing the more polished and crowded audiences at Birmingham, London, and Dublin; this was the grand motive exhibited in sermons for the promotion of public charities; and this was the rock on which he rested all his hopes, in the prospect of death. It is true, as we have seen, he was shaken for a time by the writings of a *Whitby*, and a *Priestley:* but this transient hesitation, by the overruling grace of God tended only to establish him more firmly in the end. "Blessed be his dear name," says he under his last affliction, "who shed his blood for me. He helps me to rejoice at times, with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, and the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fullness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me; and far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor with every earthly good about him, but without a God."

Notwithstanding this, however, there were those in Birmingham, and other places, who would not allow that *he preached the gospel.* And if by the gospel were meant the doctrine taught by Mr. *Huntington*, Mr. *Bradford*, and others who follow hard after them, it must be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to destroy his accountableness to his Creator; if his inability to obey the law, or comply with the gospel, be of such a nature as to excuse him in the neglect of either; or if not, yet if Christ's coming under the law frees believers from all obligation to obey its precepts; if gospel invitations are addressed only to the regenerate; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit consist in revealing to us the secret purposes of God concerning

us, or impressing us with the idea that we are the favourites of Heaven; if believing such impressions be Christian faith, and doubting of their validity unbelief; if there be no such thing as progressive sanctification, nor any sanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before described; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are; and if these things constitute the *gospel*, Mr. Pearce certainly *did not* preach it. But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men not as elect, nor as non-elect; but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a pregressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he inclines us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed—then Mr. Pearce *did* preach the gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is *another gospel*, and *not the gospel of Christ*.

Moreover, If the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by the above writers, and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will, in some degree, correspond with this representation. And is it evident to all men who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of *hatred*, *variance*, *emulations*, *wrath*, *strife*, *railings*, *evil surmisings*, and *perverse disputings*; that it renders those who embrace it *lovers of their own selves*, *covetous*, *boasters*, *proud*, *false accusers*, *fierce*, *despisers of those that are good*; while that of his adversaries promotes *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *long-suffering*, *gentle-*

ness, goodness, faith, meekness, and *temperance?* . . . . WHY EVEN OF YOURSELVES, JUDGE YE NOT WHAT IS RIGHT? . . . . YE SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS.

Mr. Pearce's ideas of preaching *human obligation*, may be seen in the following extract from a letter, addressed to a young minister who was sent out of the church of which he was pastor. "You request my thoughts how a minister should preach *human obligation.* I would reply, do it *extensively,* do it *constantly;* but withal, do it *affectionately* and *evangelically.* I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives; as, the example of Christ—the ends of his suffering and death—the consciousness of his approbation—the assistance he has promised—the influence of a holy conversation on God's people, and on the people of the world—the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus—and the hope of eternal holiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on *some occasions* to show the obligations of man to love his Creator—the reasonableness of the divine law—and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to *illuminate*, but after all, it is *the gospel of the grace of God* that will most effectually *animate*, and impel to action."

Mr. Pearce's affection to the doctrine of the cross was not merely, nor principally, on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others, whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son, but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness in the divine law, as being holy, just, and good, nor in the mediation of Christ, as doing honour to it. That which, in his view, constituted the glory of the gospel, was

that God is therein revealed as *the just God and the Saviour—just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

He was a lover of good men.—He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer, and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the deacons—"Give my love to all the dear people. O pray that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, O my dear people! O my dear family, when shall I return to you again!" He conscientiously dissented from the Church of England, and from every other national establishment of religion, as inconsistent with what he judged the scriptural account of the nature of Christ's kingdom: nor was he less conscientious in his rejection of infant baptism, considering it as having no foundation in the holy scriptures, and as tending to confound the church and the world; yet he embraced with brotherly affection, great numbers of godly men, both in and out of the establishment. His spirit was truly catholic: he loved all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Let us pray," said he in a letter to a friend, "for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love—not this part, or the other, but who love—HER—that is, the whole body of Christ."

He bore good will to all mankind.—It was from this principle that he so ardently desired to go and preach the gospel to the heathen. And even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would say, "My soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever: I long to become an apostle to the world!" The errors and sins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the sight of God: but he knew also that he himself was a sinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compassion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour, never appeared to have operated in a way of unchristian bitterness against those who rejected these

important doctrines; and though he was shamefully traduced by professors of another description as a mere legal preacher, and his ministry held up as affording no food for the souls of believers, and could not but feel the injury of such misrepresentations; yet he does not appear to have cherished unchristian resentment, but would at any time have laid himself out for the good of his worst enemies. It was his constant endeavour to promote as good an understanding between the different congregations in the town as the nature of their different religious sentiments would admit. The cruel bitterness of many people against Dr. Priestley and his friends, at and after the Birmingham riots, was affecting to his mind. Such methods of opposing error he abhorred. His regard to mankind made him lament the consequences of war: but while he wished and prayed for peace to the nations, and especially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he stood aloof from the fire of political contention. In an excellent Circular Letter to the churches of the Midland Association in 1794, of which he was the writer, he thus expresses himself—"Have as little as possible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controversies. An inordinate pursuit of these, we are sorry to observe, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety; and caused the love of many, formerly zealous professors to wax cold. The Lord reigneth; it is our place to *rejoice in his government*, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The establishment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all those national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." If he could write in this manner in 1794, his seeing a hopeful undertaking, in which he had taken a more than common interest, blasted by this species of folly in 1796, would not lessen his aversion to it.* From this time more than ever, he turned his whole attention to the promoting of the kingdom of Christ, cherishing and recommending a spirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the sentiments inculcated in the last ser-

* See Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission, Vol. I. p. 257.

mon that he printed, and the last but one that he preached.* His dear young friends who are gone to India will never forget how earnestly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themselves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient subjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reside.

It was love that tempered his faithfulness with so large a portion of tender concern for the good of those whose conduct he was obliged to censure.—He could not bear them that were evil, but would set himself against them with the greatest firmness: yet it were easy to discover the pain of mind with which this necessary part of duty was discharged. It is well remembered how he conducted himself towards certain preachers in the neighbourhood, who, wandering from place to place, corrupted and embroiled the churches; whose conduct he knew to be as dishonourable as their principles were loose and unscriptural: and when requested to recite particulars in his own defence, his fear and tenderness for character, his modest reluctance to accuse persons older than himself, and his deep concern that men engaged in the Christian ministry should render such accusations necessary, were each conspicuous, and proved to all present, that the work of an accuser was to him a *strange work.*

It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labour in season and out of season for the salvation of sinners.—This was the spring of that constant stream of activity by which his life was distinguished. His conscience would not suffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuse," he would say, "lest I should shrink from duty. Unjustifiable ease is worse than the most difficult labours to which duty calls." To persons who never entered into his views and feelings, some parts of his conduct, especially those which relate to his desire of quitting his country that he might preach the gospel to the heathen, will appear extravagant: but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the apostle. *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us.*

* See page 367. Note.

He was frequently told that his exercises were too great for his strength: but such was the ardour of his heart, "He could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his last sermon, he thought he should not have been able to get through; but when he got a little warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indisposition, preaching with equal fervour and freedom as when in perfect health. When he was laid aside, he could not forbear hoping that he should some time resume his delightful work; and knowing the strength of his feelings to be such that it would be unsafe to trust himself, he proposed for a time to write his discourses, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

All his counsels, cautions, and reproofs, appear to have been the effect of love.—It was a rule dictated by his heart, no less than by his judgment, to discourage all evil-speaking: nor would he approve of just censure unless some good and necessary end were to be answered by it. Two of his distant friends being at his house together, one of them, during the absence of the other, suggested something to his disadvantage. He put a stop to the conversation by answering, "He is here, take him aside, and tell him of it by himself: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitless speculations, he would in an affectionate manner endeavour to draw off their attention from these mazes of confusion to the simple doctrine of the cross. A specimen of this kind treatment will be seen in the letter, No. I. towards the close of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the *rising generation*. The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgot his melting discourses which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth he wrote to one of his friends, "O how should I rejoice were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and *little* congregations!" Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare;

several of his letters are addressed to young persons. See No. II. and No. III. towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a *father*, as a *Christian father* especially. What, *three* of a family! and these three at once! O the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, of this unfathomable grace! My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness; exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world—Perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. Oh what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter—"Present our love to dear Mrs. S—— and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows—"I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V——, and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected from every symptom, and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way for recovery. His mind, for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost

constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind; he feared he had been a hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting; both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt *so strongly* the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust was not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late, he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend, "but Jesus shall be our teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted, by such pursuits for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it, and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce, having patiently inspected it, discovered where the operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed, rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and a prayer-meeting being at hand, said to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working:* let us go and worship Him."

His mild and gentle disposition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon persons in matters wherein at first they have shown

themselves averse. When collecting for the Baptist mission, a gentleman who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that undertaking, made some objections, on the ground that the Baptists had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging that the parties concerned in this business were entirely of another mind. "I am glad to hear it," said the gentleman, "but I have my fears." "Then pray, sir," said Mr. Pearce, "do not give till you are satisfied." "Why, I assure you," replied the other, "I think the Methodists more likely to succeed than you; and should feel more pleasure in giving them ten guineas than you one." "If you give them twenty guineas, sir," said Mr. Pearce, "we shall rejoice in their success; and if you give us one, I hope it will not be misapplied." The gentleman smiled, and gave him four.

His figure, to a superficial observer, would at first sight convey nothing very interesting; but on close inspection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his soul. Calm, placid, and, when in the pulpit especially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expressive of the interest he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience; his eyes beaming benignity, and speaking in the most impressive language his willingness to *impart, not only the gospel of God, but his own soul also.*

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear; he relished the elegancies of science, and felt alive to the most delicate and refined sentiments: yet these were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himself. They were rather his amusements than his employment.

His address was easy and insinuating; his voice pleasant, but sometimes overstrained in the course of his sermon; his language chaste, flowing, and inclining to the florid: this last, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather slow than rapid; his attitude graceful, and his countenance in almost all his discourses approaching to an affectionate smile. He never appears, however, to have studied what are called the graces of pulpit action; or, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifest that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of speech, at the time. Both his action and language

were the genuine expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving every thing pompous in his appearance, he has on some occasions been prejudged to his disadvantage : but the song of the nightingale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter to Mr. C—— of L——, who was sent out of his church ; and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV. towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education : but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages, wherever he could find access and opportunity ; and as he sought the good of their souls, so he both laboured and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally, *He possessed a large portion of real happiness.*—There are few characters whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love : and *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was, *to see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance.* "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause !"*

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the con-

* See the Letter to Dr. Ryland, May 30, 1796, p. 325.

version of three of his children ; and thus it was when speaking of a people who had divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers ; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship—" These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, " in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9—12, which he delivered at a meeting of ministers at Arnsby, April 18, 1797 ; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend *Birt*. "I had much pleasure a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples : *I go to prepare a place for you.* What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain ! what a sweet view of heaven as a place of *society !* It is *one place* for us all ; that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble to part no more. Where He is, there we shall be also. Oh blessed anticipation ! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs ; Abraham, and all the patriarchs ; Isaiah, and all the prophets ; Paul, and all the apostles ; Gabriel, and all the angels ; and above all, Jesus, and all his ransomed people ! Oh to be amongst the number ! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct ! What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness !"

In many persons the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution ; but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing ; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears ; but they were

frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of his audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

No. I.

To a young man whose mind he perceived was bewildered with fruitless speculations.

"The conversation we had on our way to —— so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind, till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to 'skepticism' I believe is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems, and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds: and, with some qualification, I admit Robinson's remark, 'that he who never doubted never believed.' While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph, 'Magna est veritas et prevalebit:' but there are two or three considerations which have no small weight with me, in relation to religious controversies.

"The first is, The importance of truth. It would be endless to write upon truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament,—*The atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the cross;*

Jesus Christ and him crucified. It surely cannot be a matter of small concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a cross, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we respect the Bible as an inspired book, which so plainly attributes our salvation to the grace of God, *through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus?* And if we discard the Bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all the power of evidence on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides? Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, not as the religion of our ancestors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial investigation of its evidences; that book reveals a truth of the highest importance to man, consonant to the opinions of the earliest ages, and the most enlightened nations, perfectly consistent with the Jewish economy, as to its spirit and design, altogether adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity in the sinner's salvation, and above all things calculated to beget the most established peace, to inspire with the liveliest hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedness to the interests of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate; and to the *Author* of such a doctrine, my whole soul labours to exhaust itself in praise.

'Oh the sweet wonders of the cross,
Where God my Saviour loved and died!'

"Forgive, my friend, forgive the transport of a soul compelled to feel, where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on *this* subject control my passions by the laws of logic. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord!*

"Secondly, I consider man as a depraved creature; so depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are sensual; wholly dependent on God for religious light, as well as true devotion: yet such a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing, which the narrow limits of his comprehension cannot embrace; and such a slave to his passions, as to admit no law but self-interest for his government. With these views of human nature, I am persuaded

we ought to suspect our own decisions, whenever they oppose truths too sublime for our understandings, or too pure for our lusts. 'To err' on this side, indeed, 'is human;' wherefore the wise man saith, 'He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.' Should therefore the evidence be only equal on the side of the gospel of Christ, I should think, with this allowance, we should do well to admit it.

"Thirdly, If the gospel of Christ be true, it should be heartily embraced. We should yield ourselves to its influence without reserve. We must come to a point, and resolve to be either infidels, or Christians. To know the power of the sun, we should expose ourselves to his rays; to know the sweetness of honey, we must bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of these cases; much less will it in matters of religion. *My son*, saith God, *give me thine heart!*

"Fourthly, An humble admission of the light we already have, is the most effectual way to a full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. *If any man will* DO *his will, he shall know his doctrine whether it be of God.* If we honour God as far as we know his will, he will honour us with further discoveries of it. Thus shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus shall you, my dear friend, become assured that there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus Christ; and thus from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, you will join the admiring church, and say of Jesus, 'This is my beloved, this is my friend; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.' Yes, I yet hope, I expect to see you rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and appearing as a living witness that he is faithful who hath said, 'Seek and ye shall find; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.'

"S. P."

In another letter to the same correspondent, after congratulating himself that he had discovered such a mode of killing nox-

ious insects as should put them to the least pain, and which was characteristic of the tenderness of his heart, he proceeds as follows:—"But enough of nature: how is my brother *as a Christian?* We have had some interesting moments in conversation on the methods of grace, that grace whose influence reaches to the day of adversity, and the hour of death; seasons when, of every thing beside it may be said, Miserable comforters are they all! My dear friend, we will amuse ourselves with philosophy, but Christ shall be our teacher; Christ shall be our glory; Christ shall be our portion. Oh that we may be enabled 'to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!'

"Affectionately yours,

"S. P."

No. II.

To a young gentleman of his acquaintance, who was then studying physic at Edinburgh.

"Did my dear friend P—— know with what sincere affection, and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters have produced. Indeed there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem: and I can assure you that *every interview* and *every letter* still tend to consolidate my regard.

"Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life were equal to your wishes, or my own. Your situation demands all the aid which the wisdom and prudence

of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means for obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

"I thank you sincerely for the freedom wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a *determined adherence* to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract, and the associates you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons will be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their attrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals, from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view. Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement, with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

"That morality is friendly to individual happiness, and to social order, no man, who respects his own conscience, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles which support a virtuous practice be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only support, from the principles of religion. 'The fear of the Lord (said the wise man) is to hate evil.' He, therefore, who endeavours to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a skeptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an *ever present God*, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, HE is a worse enemy than the man who meets me with the pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend, then, fall into the company of those, whose friendship cannot be purchased but by the sacrifice of revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opin-

ion of men who blaspheme piety, and dishonour God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the good old path of devotion as too antiquated for any but monks and hermits; so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the company and the applause of the sons of politeness. Oh that God may be a buckler and a shield to defend you from their assaults! Let but their private morals be inquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favourable testimony to the good tendency of skepticism; and it may be regarded as an indisputable axiom, That what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

"Were I to argue *à posteriori* in favour of truth, I should contend that those principles must be true, which (first) corresponded with general observation—(secondly) tended to general happiness—(thirdly) preserved a uniform connexion between cause and effect, evil and remedy, in all situations.

"I would then apply these data to the principles held on the one side, by the deists; and on the other, by the believers in revelation. In the application of the *first*, I would refer to the state of human nature. The deist contends for its purity, and powers. Revelation declares its depravity, and weakness. I compare these opposite declarations with the facts that fall under constant observation. Do I not see that there is a larger portion of vice in the world, than of virtue; that no man needs a solicitation to evil, but every man a guard against it; and that thousands bewail their subjection to lusts, which they have not power to subdue, whilst they live in moral slavery, and cannot burst the chain? Which principle then shall I admit? Will observation countenance the *deistical?* I am convinced to the contrary, and must say, I cannot be a deist without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reason, I must deny my senses.

"I take the *second* datum, and inquire, which tends most to general happiness? To secure happiness, three things are necessary:—*object*, *means*, and *motives*. The question is,—Which points out the *true source* of happiness; which directs to the *best means* for attaining it; and which furnishes me with the most *powerful motives* to induce my pursuit of it? If I take a deist for my tutor,

he tells me that *fame* is the object ; universal *accommodation of manners to interest*, the means ; and *self-love* the spring of action. Sordid teacher ! From him I turn to *Jesus*. His better voice informs me, that the source of felicity is the *friendship of my God ;* that *love to my Maker*, and *love to man*, expressed in all the noble and amiable effusions of devotion and benevolence, are the means ; and that *the glory of God*, and *the happiness of the universe*, must be my motives. Blessed Instructor, thy dictates approve themselves to every illuminated conscience, to every pious heart ! Do they not, my dear P———, approve themselves to yours.

" But I will not tire your patience by pursuing these remarks. Little did I think of such amplification when I first took up my pen. Oh that I may have the joy of finding that these (at least well meant) endeavours to establish your piety have not been ungraciously received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind ! I am encouraged to these effusions of friendship by that amiable *self-distrust* which your letter expresses ; a temper not only becoming the earlier stages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

Unspeakable satisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conscious of the necessity of ' first' seeking assistance from heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honourable, this equitable sentiment. " In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths.'

" I hope you will still be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half hour's intercourse with God, than the friendship of the whole college can impart. Too much acquaintance would be followed with a waste of that precious time, on the present improvement of which your future usefulness and respectability in your profession depend Like the bee, you may do best by sipping the sweets of every flower ; but remember, the sweetest blossom is not the *hive*.

" Yours very affectionately,

" S. P."

"P. S. So many books have been published on the same subject as the manuscript you have helped me to copy, that I have not sent it to the press."*

No. III.

To a young Lady at school, Miss A. H. a daughter of one of the members of his Church.

"I CANNOT deny myself the pleasure, which this opportunity affords me, of expressing the concern I feel for your happiness, arising from the sincerest friendship; a friendship, which the many amiable qualities you possess, together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of seeing them displayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

"It affords me inexpressible pleasure to hear, that you are so happy in your present situation; a situation in which I rejoice to see you placed, because it is not merely calculated to embellish the manners, but to profit the soul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidst the various pursuits of an ornamental or scientific nature which she may adopt, will not omit the first, that great concern, the dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal soul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promises of God, the sweetness and usefulness of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the security it affords in temptation, the support it gives in death, and the prospects it opens of life everlasting; all these considerations, backed with

* The compiler believes this was an answer to Mr. Peter Edward's *Candid Reasons, &c.* He knows Mr. Pearce did write an answer to that performance. By the effrontery of the writer he has acknowledged he was at first a little stunned; but upon examining his arguments, found it no very difficult undertaking to point out their fallacy.

the uncertainty of life, the solemnity of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conscience and of God,—all demand your heart for the *Blessed Jehovah.* This, and nothing short of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often *written* on religion: it is time you should FEEL it now. Oh what a blessedness will attend your hearty surrender of yourself to the God and Father of men! Methinks I see all the angels of God rejoicing at the sight, all the saints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jesus himself, who died for sinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thousand streams of goodness flowing from your renovated soul to refresh the aged saint, and to encourage your fellow-youth to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and press on to God. But Oh, should I be mistaken! Alas, alas, I cannot bear the thought! Oh thou Saviour of sinners, and God of love! take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

"If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the state of religion in your own soul, and be assured of every sympathy or advice that I am capable of feeling or giving.

"Affectionately yours,

"S. P."

No. IV.

To a young Minister, Mr. C———, of L———, on preparation for the pulpit.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"YOUR first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the Sabbath's disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. Could I choose my frames, I would say respecting industry in preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting

Christian obedience; I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend on the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

"I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God, was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learned from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

"Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me that you have been 'exceedingly tried in the pulpit:' but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the Christian minister's experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother: those whose labours God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve; but the sieve is in our Saviour's hands; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

"You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished me with any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

"I should advise you when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable: First, Endeavour to think *in a train*. Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance,—If speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul; as, pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c.;

then to go to those parts of Christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former; as, promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order; as, the enlargement of the understanding, purification of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels, and Christ himself, which will be *eternal:* thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending step by step, you at last arrive in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural, and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the preacher: for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

"Secondly, Labour to *render your ideas transparent to yourself.* Never offer to introduce a thought, which you cannot *see through* before you enter the pulpit.—You have read in *Claude*, that the best preparative to preach from a subject, is to understand it: and I think Bishop Burnet says, No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at *any time* represent it to others.

"If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you—1. To *read good and easy authors; Dr. Watts especially.*—2. To *write a great part of your sermons*, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought.—3. Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, *start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated.* Fasten on some leading ideas; as, the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c. Never mind how far you ramble from the point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application.—4. *Divest yourself of all fear.* If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety; unless it makes nonsense, or bad divinity, never try to mend it; but let it pass. If so, perhaps only

a few would notice it; but if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

"In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you, and requesting you will not fail to pray for the least of saints, but

"Yours affectionately,

"S. P."

A MORNING SONG.

"God of our lives, our morning songs
To thee we cheerful raise;
Thy acts of love 'tis good to sing,
And pleasant 'tis to praise.

Guardian of man, thy wakeful eyes,
Nor sleep, nor slumber know:
Thine eyes pierce through the shades of night,
Intent on all below.

Sustain'd by thee, our opening eyes
Salute the morning light;
Secure I stand, unhurt by all
The arrows of the night.

My life renew'd, my strength repair'd,
To thee, my God, is due;
Teach me thy ways, and give me grace
My duty to pursue.

From every evil me defend,
But guard me most from sin;
Direct my going out, Oh Lord,
And bless my coming in!

Oh may thy holy fear command
Each action, thought, and word;
Then shall I sweetly close the day,
Approved of thee, my Lord."

AN EVENING SONG.

"AUTHOR of life, with grateful heart
My evening song I'll raise;
But Oh, thy thousand thousand gifts
Exceed my highest praise.

What shall I render to thy care,
Which me this day has kept?
A thankful heart 's the least return,
And this thou wilt accept.

Now night has spread her sable wings,
I would the day review;
My errors nicely mark, and see
What still I have to do.

What sins, or follies, holy God,
I may this day have done;
I would confess with grief, and pray
For pardon through thy Son.

Much of my precious time I've lost;
This foolish waste forgive:
By one day nearer brought to death,
May I begin to live!"

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

The great ends of Christian Biography are instruction and example. By faithfully describing the lives of men eminent for godliness, we not only embalm their memory, but furnish ourselves with fresh materials and motives for a holy life. It is abundantly more impressive to view the religion of Jesus as operating in a living character, than to contemplate it abstractedly. For this reason we may suppose the Lord the Spirit has condescended to exhibit first and principally, the life of Christ; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reason, he by his holy influences still furnishes the church with now and then a singular example of godliness, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reasonable doubt that the life of Mr. Pearce ought to be considered as one of these examples. May that same Divine Spirit who had manifestly so great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both instruction and edification!

First, *In him we may see the holy efficacy, and by consequence, the truth of the Christian religion.*—It was long since asked, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* This question contained a challenge to men of all religions, who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diversity of species: every nation worshipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to themselves: philosophers also were divided into numerous sects, each flattering itself that it had found the truth: even the Jews had their divisions; their Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds, an apostle could look them all in the face, and ask, *Who is he that overcometh the world?* The same question might

safely be asked in every succeeding age. The various kinds of religions that still prevail; the Pagan, Mahometan, Jewish, Papal, or Protestant, may form the exteriors of man according to their respective models; but where is the man amongst them, save the true believer in Jesus, that overcometh the world? Men may cease from particular evils, and assume a very different character; may lay aside their drunkenness, blasphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkish austerity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The lusts of the flesh will on many occasions give place to those of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrine of the cross, to feel not merely a dread of the consequences of sin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and by conversing with invisible realities, to become regardless of the best, and fearless of the worst, that this world has to dispense;—this is the effect of genuine Christianity, and this is standing proof of its divine original. Let the most inveterate enemy of revelation have witnessed the disinterested benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and, whether he would own it or not, his conscience must have borne testimony that this is true religion. The same may be said of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the *hearts* of his hearers or not, his spirit and life must have approved itself to their *consciences*.

Secondly, *In him we see how much may be done for God in a little time.*—If his death had been foreknown by his friends, some might have hesitated whether it was worth while for him to engage in the work of the ministry for so short a period: yet, if we take a view of his labours, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is not always the longest which is spun out to the greatest extent of days. The first of all lives amounted but to thirty-three years; and the most important works pertaining to that were wrought in the last three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a short life a long one, and a long life a short one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is squandered away in sloth, or trifling pursuits, forms a kind of blank in human life: in looking over it there is nothing for the mind to rest upon; and a whole life so spent, whatever number of

years it may contain, must appear upon reflection short and vacant, in comparison of one filled up with valuable acquisitions, and holy actions. It is like the space between us and the sun, which, though immensely greater than that which is traversed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty space, the mind goes over it in much less time, and without any satisfaction. If 'that life be long which answers life's great end,' Mr. Pearce may assuredly be said to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a small degree, difficulties are magnified into impossibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion; or if we be induced to engage in something of this kind, it will be at the expense of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But some will ask, How are our hearts to be in our work? Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the sacred flame in him appears to have been,—The constant habit of conversing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly, In him we see, in clear and strong colours, *to what a degree of solid peace and joy, true religion will raise us, even in the present world.*——A little religion, it has been justly said, will make us miserable; but a great deal will make us happy. The one will do little more than keep the conscience alive, while our numerous defects and inconsistencies are perpetually furnishing it with materials to scourge us: the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that so much of the spirit of bondage, and so little of the spirit of adoption prevails among Christians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occasional, than habitual; or if in some instances it be otherwise, we are ready to suspect that it is supported in part by the strange fire of enthusiasm, and not by the pure flame of scriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce, we saw a devotion ardent, steady, pure, and persevering; kindled, as we may say, at the altar of God, like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night nor by day. He seemed to have learned that heavenly art, so conspicuous among the primitive Christians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love, and joy,

and praise. Hence he 'laboured,' as he expresses it, 'to exercise most love to God when suffering most severely;' and hence he so affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

'Sweet affliction, sweet affliction,
Singing as I wade to heaven.'

The constant happiness that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his sermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourselves we shall ordinarily communicate to our hearers; and it has been already noticed, that one of the most distinguished properties of his discourses was,—that they inspired the serious mind with the liveliest sensations of happiness. They descended upon the audience, not indeed like a transporting flood, but like a shower of dew, gently insinuating itself into the heart, insensibly dissipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy: while the countenance was brightened almost into a smile, tears of pleasure would rise, and glisten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the slander so generally cast upon the religion of Jesus, that it fills the mind with gloom and misery! No: leaving futurity out of the question, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who possessed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly, From his example we are furnished with *the greatest encouragement, while pursuing the path of duty, to place our trust in God.*——The situation in which he left his family, we have seen already, was not owing to an indifference to their interest, or an improvident disposition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them; but to a steady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him and longed to be able to assure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for: but owing to circumstances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a poin in which he was called to *die in faith*: and indeed so he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindness,

which, immediately after his decease, flowed from the religious public: but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. 'Oh that I could speak,' said he to Mrs. Pearce a little before his death, 'I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction; now it worketh glory, glory!' And when she told him the workings of her mind, he answered, 'Oh trust the Lord! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation: I feel your sorrows: but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children.'

The liberal contributions which have since been made, though they do not warrant ministers in general to expect the same, and much less to neglect providing for their own families on such a presumption; yet they must need be considered as a singular encouragement, when we are satisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately 'careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God.'

Finally, In him we see that *the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions; but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, assiduous, and uniform conduct.*——Real greatness attaches to character; and character arises from a *course of action.* Solid reputation as a merchant arises not from a man's having made his fortune by a few successful adventures; but from a course of wise economy, and honourable industry, which, gradually accumulating, advances by pence to shillings, and by shillings to pounds. The most excellent philosophers are not those who have dealt chiefly in splendid speculations, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice; but those who have felt their interests united with the interests of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the same in religion. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any further than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having

given sight to the blind, or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his *going about* continually *doing good.*

These single attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it, nor discernment to know the way in which it is obtained. One pursues the shade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims at once to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the summit; the other, walking round it, in pursuit of another object, gradually and insensibly ascends till he reaches it: seeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow-Christians

THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE GRAVE

OF

THE REV. SAMUEL PEARCE,

OCTOBER 16, 1799.

BY THE REV. J. BREWER.

We are called together to-day upon a most solemn and affecting occasion. Our business here is, to convey the precious remains of a dear departed brother to his long home, to the house appointed for all living. The subject of our present contemplation is of no ordinary kind; it is that which ought to come home to every man's bosom, because it is that in which we are all interested. It is not like many other subjects, which, while some are materially affected by them, to others they are articles of total indifference: but death speaks in an imperious tone, and demands the attention of all.

Death! solemn sound! the bare annunciation of which, should arrest the mind of every individual in this numerous assembly. Where is the man that liveth and shall not see death? When Xerxes viewed his incalculable army, it is said, he wept from the consideration that in a few years, not one of that prodigious host would be living. Whether the Persian really wept or not, I am not sure; but when I consider, that in a few, comparatively a

very few years, not one of all whom I am now addressing but must be laid as low as the breathless corpse of our dear departed brother, I feel my mind deeply affected. And O that I could but awaken a due concern in every bosom about this truly momentous subject!

Thus stands the irrevocable decree of the immutable God—IT IS APPOINTED UNTO ALL MEN ONCE TO DIE. The wise and unwise, the patrician and plebeian, the monarch and the beggar, must submit alike to the strong arm of this universal conqueror, the king of terrors. A consideration like this, should sink deep into every man's heart; but alas! man is a strange being, loth to learn what most intimately belongs to him. The most awful things lose their effect by their frequency; and hence it is, that the death of a fellow-creature is, in general, no more regarded than "the fall of an autumnal leaf in the pathless desert." Wretched apathy! Fatal insensibility!

Let us for a moment meditate upon the effects subsequent to the triumph of the last enemy. What melancholy ravages does he make, even in this world! He causes the fairest flower to wither, often in the morning; he stains the pride of all sublunary glory; and casts the noblest work of God into the dust. When he takes to himself his great power, none can stay his hand. Fixed in his purpose, and irresistible in the execution of the same, he stalks, untouched by the pangs of agonizing nature; the distress of helpless infancy; the poignant grief of paternal affection; or the bitterest sorrows of connubial love. Relentlessly he breaks in upon domestic happiness; frustrates the most benevolent designs; and casts a dark shade upon the brightest prospects. In fine, cruelty marks his footsteps; and desolation and anguish are his common attendants.

If we look beyond the scene which presents itself to our view in this life; and, by the aid of revelation, endeavour to substantiate the serious realities of death, beyond "that bourne from whence no traveller returns;" if we look into the eternal world, and there behold what *follows* death, surely we cannot remain unmoved.

Man is immortal; it is the flesh only that dies: The spirit is incorruptible. Hence death is the most eventful period. The

body returns to dust; but the spirit ascends to God; and enters then upon its eternal state. But the state of all men is not alike beyond the grave—*The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.* The guilty sinner then knows, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Guilt subjects him to the divine displeasure; and moral depravity unfits him for that place, into which nothing that defileth can possibly enter. Fearful moment! all his hopes are now like a spider's web; his imaginary refuges fail; and the wrath of God "beats upon his naked soul, in one eternal storm." The rich man, in Luke xvi. can tell us all about it. He died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment. And thus it will happen to all, who know not God. He that made them will have no mercy on them; whatever their respective situation may have been in this life. Death, that mighty leveller, will reduce them all to a sad equality. He that fared sumptuously every day, had not a drop of water to cool his burning tongue, when once he had passed the tremendous gulf.

How different the state of a good man! *The righteous hath hope in his death.* The day of his death is infinitely better than the day of his birth: It is his coronation day; the final close of all his troubles. He shall sorrow no more. Whatever he underwent in passing through this vale of tears; however numerous and severe his trials, they are all over. The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed him. He shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. He enters upon his rest, and shall go no more out for ever. He is happy, as God is happy; and saved with an everlasting salvation.

Thus death is always a solemn and affecting event: but sometimes circumstances render it peculiarly so: and this is now the case. We have conveyed no common mortal to the grave. Here lies the cold, the exanimated clay of a good man; of an eminently good man; a faithful, highly-favoured minister of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. When a good man dies, it is a common loss; thus the Psalmist viewed it. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth!* The death of such a man is a national loss, for "the strength of empire is religion." *Righteousness exalteth a nation. Good men are the salt of the earth.* It is particularly

a loss to the cause of God on earth: there is one labourer less in the vineyard; one watchman less upon the walls of Jerusalem. The death of that good man, whom we are now bewailing, is a great loss to the churches of Christ. His ardent love for the *whole* truth; his flaming zeal; his chaste conversation will be long remembered by many.

But you, my brethren, who compose the church and congregation in this place, you have had a great breach made upon you; a breach that cannot easily be repaired. You have lost a valuable minister; a man who laboured hard for your eternal good; a man whose grand aim was to make you happy for ever. You know how frequently he has warned you to flee from the wrath to come; how plainly he has pointed you to the Lamb of God, as the only sacrifice for your sins. Yes, ye are witnesses how he has prayed for you, and wept over you. You have often heard him raise, within these walls, his charming voice, in publishing glad tidings to Zion. This night twelve months, the place that I am now occupying, was occupied by him. This *very* night twelve months, you heard the gospel in this *very* place, from *his* mouth: But it is all over; you shall hear his voice, you shall see his face, no more. There lies all that could die of a good man; a faithful minister; a tender father; and an affectionate husband. His lips are closed in silence; and a long night hangs upon his eyes. Dust is returning to dust; and corruption already commences its riot.

Painful as the stroke has been to you, there are those, on whom it has fallen with greater severity. You may be provided with another minister; but who can make up the loss to his bereaved family? Who can restore him to the deeply afflicted partner of his life? who like him, can soothe her sorrows, and cheer her on the rugged path of time? Who can restore the fond father to five dear helpless babes? Cruel death! Inexorable monster! What has thou done?—But the Lord reigneth, and we will be still.

The present dispensation is not only solemn and affecting, but it is likewise alarming. It has a loud voice: not to attend to it, would be highly criminal. It speaks to us all. Death always speaks loudly; but some deaths louder than others. The present

speaks loud enough to be heard BY THIS CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Methinks, with strong emphasis, it now saith, UNTO YOU, O MEN OF THIS PLACE, I CALL. You have had a great loss; but is there not a cause? God forbid that I should charge the death of your minister upon you! Yet I know it is possible for a people to murder their minister; and that by the most cruel means. There needs neither the poison nor the dagger; it may be done effectually without either. I hope it is quite inapplicable; but it may not be altogether useless, to ask, Are there none of you, who have pierced him through with many sorrows? Has his heart never been wrung by your unkindness? Has your misbehaviour, in your Christian profession, never caused him to say, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them?* Jer. ix. 2. Though I thus speak, I am sure it has no general application. Few men were better beloved by their people than he was. Your many prayers for his recovery; your tender solicitude for his welfare; your present evident distress, all speak for you: your tears do you honour. But let me speak it again; should there be a cruel individual amongst you, to whom the charge applies, I would not for a world, be that man: He must answer for it another day. God will avenge his own elect.

Where this has not been the case; where nothing but kindness marked your behaviour towards your departed friend; has he had no occcasion to weep in secret on your account, because though you esteemed the man, you neglected his message? Ah brethren! it is to be feared, unless your state as a church and congregation be singular, that the word preached did not profit all of you. Some of you may yet be in your sins. God has borne long with you; but he may have been weary of forbearing; he may have been angry at your infidelity; and in judgment taken away his servant. I do not say this is the case; but if it be only a *possible* case, it should cause searchings of heart amongst you.

It is a providence that speaks to us all, as MORTAL MEN. In a little time, according to the common course of nature, the place that now knows us, shall know us no more. Time, with rapid wing, bears us away to that place, where no device nor work is

found ; to that state, where there is no distinction, but that of just and unjust. But who can reckon upon the common extent of human life? Behold, before our eyes, a young man, who had not lived out half his days, called to eternity, in the thirty-fourth year of his life. Should not this awaken our concern, and excite us to make that important inquiry, WHO SHALL BE THE NEXT ? He who bids the fairest for length of years, may be the first to fall. Let us then so number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

We will now "turn to the bright reverse of this mortifying scene." We have hitherto looked at the dark side of the cloud, let us now contemplate its luminous one.

Death, we admit, is a penalty—*by sin came death.* Death is an enemy—*the last enemy ;* but, blessed be God, he is a conquered enemy. The Captain of our salvation has destroyed him who had the power of death. Influenced by the faith of God's elect, believers in all ages have triumphed over death ; they have sung with their expiring breath, and exulted amidst the swellings of Jordan.

Death is amongst the privileges of the children of God. *Death is yours.* He meets them as a friend, as an envoy commissioned by their heavenly Father, to bring them to his throne. Our eyes have frequently beheld the victory of faith, in the dark valley. Assaulted on either hand by pale disease, and its long train of attendants, we have seen good men rising superior to all the evils of their situation ; feeling a "majesty in death ;" and entering the eternal world, shouting, *Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory.*

This is not all. The total destruction of death is laid in the irreversible counsel of the Most High. The last enemy shall be destroyed. Death himself must die. The tabernacle of God shall be with men ; he will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death. The sea shall give up its dead, and those that are in their graves shall come forth. Then the Lord Jesus will make his triumph complete, and cast death and hell into the lake of fire and brimstone. The re-animated dust of the redeemed shall then be perfectly released from the bondage of

corruption, and made like unto the glorious body of their great Head: the whole number of the elect shall then be presented before the presence of the divine glory, with exceeding great joy.

One grand indispensable inquiry yet remains—By what means may we attain to the resurrection of the just? In search of this important subject, we are not left to wander in the maze of uncertainty and doubt; the way into the holiest is made manifest. There are three things absolutely requisite for a man to be acquainted with, before we can enter into life.

First, The pardon of our sins. The scripture proposes this unspeakable gift by the blood of Jesus. *We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.* Ephes. i. 7.

Secondly, the justification of our persons. Provision for which is made by the obedience of the Son of God. *He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Rom. x. 4.

Thirdly, The sanctification of our nature. *Jesus is of God made unto us sanctification.* 1. Cor. i. 30. By the influence of his Spirit upon our hearts, "we are made partakers of the divine nature; sanctified in body, soul, and spirit; and changed thus into the divine image, as by the Spirit of our God." 2 Cor. iii. 8.

This is the only method of salvation countenanced in scripture; and it seems a method, "just to God, and safe to man."

To conclude. Though we sorrow to-day, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. God, who has taken away our dear brother, will take care of his. He will be a husband to the forlorn widow, and a father to the dear tender babes. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* God will provide; he will surely do them good; he has the hearts of all men in his hands; he will raise up friends for them; and eventually make it appear, that even this dark dispensation is amongst the all things that work together for good.

He that has the government upon his shoulders, will take care of you, my brethren, as a church. A pastor is provided for you; and he who knows him will bring him amongst you in his own way and time. Trust in the Lord; he will never forsake Zion; her

walls are ever before him. Take his word for your rule; live according to the same ; seek him by prayer and supplication ; and you shall yet praise him.

We now bid farewell, a *long* farewell, to the sleeping dust of our departed brother : but, blessed be God, though it be a long fare well, it will not be an everlasting one. We shall meet again. What we are to-day sowing in dishonour, shall be raised in glory. The trumpet shall sound; our brother will arise ; we shall meet no more to part. When Jesus comes, he will bring all his saints with him. Comfort ye one another with these things.

The promised presence of Christ with his people a source of consolation under the most painful bereavements.

A SERMON,

Occasioned by the death of

THE REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

BY JOHN RYLAND, D. D.

JOHN xiv. 18.

I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you.

So deeply am I sensible of the loss sustained by this church in general, not to say by the nearest relative of my dear departed brother, that on a partial view of their circumstances, (and our views, especially of afflictive events, are too commonly partial,) I could not be surprised, were some now present ready to exclaim, "Is there any sorrow like unto our sorrow, wherewith the Lord has this day afflicted us?" But though I scarcely know where a church could sustain an equal loss, by the removal of so young a pastor; nor can I conceive, there exists a widow, whom death has plundered of a richer store of blessings, by taking from her and from her infant care the guide of their youth; yet, on more mature consideration, we must not admit that lamentation to be applicable, even to them that feel the most pungent grief in this assembly. The event which has occasioned our present meeting, must deeply affect even strangers, whose hearts know how to feel; but all the dearest friends of the deceased must acknowledge, that

the days of tribulation, which preceded this mournful evening, were not the season of displaying the Lord's anger, but of the clear manifestation of his faithfulness and love: they were to him the days of heaven upon earth. Surely they who drank with him the deepest out of his cup of affliction, could find no savour of the curse, no, not at the bottom; nor could they drink the bitter, without tasting also of the sweet, which was not sparingly dropped into it, but copiously infused. And after such proofs and illustrations of divine fidelity, I cannot but believe, that she who needs them most of all, shall find further stores of consolation laid up for her relief: since God her Maker is her husband, who giveth songs in the night.

This church also must be reminded, that there was a church at Jerusalem, near eighteen centuries ago; which sustained a loss unspeakably greater than that which they now bewail; while yet the sorrow, which was *then* endured, was quickly turned into joy. And your affectionate pastor, who, both in health and in sickness, cared so much for your welfare, did not hesitate to recommend to your attention, the kind assurance which was given for *their* relief; as believing it to contain ground of encouragement, on which *you* also are authorized to depend. He who said to his dear disciples, "I will not leave *you* comfortless orphans, I will come unto *you*," has the same respect to his whole church in every age; and you, my brethren, may as safely rely on his gracious promise, as his very apostles.

Yes, beloved, we were authorized to make a general application of this word of consolation; and must affirm, that the promised presence of the blessed Redeemer is the best source of comfort, to all his people, in every time of trouble.

In complying with the request of my dear deceased brother, I shall first consider the subject in reference to those, to whom it was immediately addressed, and then endeavour to apply it to the present occasion.

First. Let us notice the immediate reference of this declaration, to our Lord's disciples, who were then favoured with his bodily presence.

You are well aware that the words I have read were spoken by the blessed Jesus, to those who followed him in the days of his

humiliation; and that when he thus addressed them, sorrow had filled their hearts, because he had just announced his approaching departure. He came from the Father, and was come into the world, and though the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not; but he had made himself known to these his disciples, whom he had chosen out of the world; and now when he was about to leave them, and go unto the Father, though his stupid and ungrateful countrymen would rather rejoice at his leaving the earth, than bewail it, yet his disciples could not but weep and lament, and be sorrowful; and surely, well they might, at the thought of losing such an invaluable friend!

Especially we might expect this to be the case, if we reflect on the manner in which he was to be removed from them. They were to see him falsely accused, unjustly condemned, and cruelly murdered; being nailed to the cross with wicked hands, suspended between two thieves, and while thus numbered with transgressors, insulted and derided in his last agonies. Yes, he would be treated as the object of national abhorrence and execration, and that by the only people upon earth, who professed to be the worshippers of the true God. And his disciples must either view this barbarous treatment of their blessed Lord, or hide themselves from the shocking scene, by forsaking him in the hour of distress. In the meanwhile, he was also apparently abandoned by God himself, the zeal of whose house had consumed him; the Lord was pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief; he was resolved to make his soul an offering for sin, and therefore he called on his sword to awake against him, who was their Good Shepherd; though he was one in covenant, yea, one in nature with himself; who could without robbery claim equality with God. What could be more surprising, distressing, and perplexing to his disciples, than such a series of events?

While Jesus was with them he had fed them, and kept them as a shepherd doth his flock; he had laid them like lambs in his bosom, and led them on gradually in the paths of truth and righteousness, as they were able to bear it. He had been gentle among them, as a nursing father is gentle towards his little children; pitying their infirmities, rectifying their mistakes, supplying their

wants, healing their maladies ; manifesting to them his Father's will, and keeping them in his name : and must they now lose his visible presence, and see him no more ?

He had been little more than *three and thirty* years in the world, and most of them had known him but a very small part of that period ; they had, however, now beheld his glory, and were convinced that it was the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. They were satisfied that he alone had the words of eternal life ; they believed and knew that' he was the Christ, the Son of the living God ; though at present they understood but imperfectly that plan of redemption, which rendered it expedient and necessary, that he should suffer all these things and then enter into glory. This remaining ignorance must abundantly enhance their grief, at the intimations given them of his departure being at hand.*

But in these words, their gracious Lord suggests, that *they* had no occasion to sink under their sorrows. He would *not leave* them *comfortless*, like destitute *orphans*, who had no affectionate parent, no wise tutor, no faithful guardian, to supply their wants, sympathize with them, protect them from evil, or instruct them in the way of duty. No, he had promised them his Holy Spirit, to be their Comforter and Monitor ; and here he engages also, to come again to them himself; *I will come unto you* saith our Lord. This promise was fulfilled to them in several ways—

* The conception of the disciples, on the subject of Christ's atoning sacrifice, appears to have been much less distinct than those of David, Isaiah, and many of the Old Testament saints, who lived before the declension of the Jewish church ; which appears to have lost much of its spiritual light, and to have become more and more carnalized, from the days of Malachi, till the coming of our Lord. And as it seemed necessary that this general declension, and ignorance of the nature of the Messiah's character and kingdom should be suffered to take place, in order to the fulfilment of prophecy, in the death of our Saviour, by the hands of his own countrymen ; so there was an expediency, and a display of wisdom in concealing from the disciples the necessity and glorious design of Christ's Death, that they might not rejoice in so awful an event, till after it was over : had their ideas been clear on this head, they must have rejoiced in his sufferings at the very time of them ; but it seemed more fitting that they should mourn then, and that their sorrow should be turned into joy, after his resurrection.

1. In his *repeated appearances* to them, after his resurrection. Thus, as he suggests in the next verse, although in a little while, the world should see him no more, yet they should see him; and that sight should be the pledge that his words should hold good. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Accordingly the Evangelists attest, that he "showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, unto the apostles whom he had chosen, being seen of them forty days," before he was taken up into glory: for God who had raised him up, the third day after his crucifixion, "showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us," says Peter, "who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; whom he commanded to preach unto the people, and to testify that he is appointed to be the Judge of the living and the dead; and that to him all the prophets gave witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Therefore, though he soon left them again, being carried up into heaven, yet their understandings having been opened by him, that they might understand the scriptures, and see how it behooved him to suffer, and to rise again, "they worshipped him, when he was parted from them, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy," where they waited to be endued with power from on high, and received the promised effusion of the Spirit, not many days afterward. But,

2. It received a more permanent accomplishment, in the continued enjoyment of his spiritual presence and divine influence. We fully ascertain this privilege to be included in the text, by comparing this promise, *I will come unto you*, with those declarations, recorded by Matthew, which admit of no solution without the acknowledgment of Christ's proper divinity: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them. And, lo! I am with you always to the end of the world. Amen.*"

3. At the end of the world, it shall receive a further fulfilment, by our Lord's coming again in that human nature, which "*it behooved heaven to receive*, until the times of the restitution of all the things of which God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, since the world began." Then he who went to prepare a place for his disciples, and all his subsequent followers, will come again, and re-

ceive them to himself; that where he is, there they may be also. Then they who were troubled for their adherence to his cause, shall enter into rest; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. At that same period, will he take vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and punish them with everlasting destruction; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them who believe. For God will bring with him them who now sleep in Jesus, while the believers who remain at that time upon the earth shall feel a change pass upon their bodies, to render them like those who are newly raised from the dead, and all "shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore," says Paul, comfort one another with these words." He who testified these things to his disciples, while he was yet with them, repeated his promise long afterwards to his servant John, saying, "Surely I come quickly." May we unite with that beloved disciple in saying, "Amen. Even, so come, Lord Jesus."

And now, my brethren, if this assurance was sufficient to relieve the minds of the apostles, when they lost the bodily presence of their Divine Master, may we not safely proceed,

Secondly, To apply the same consolation to the relief of those who are most affected by the late bereaving providence?

This church has lost a most diligent, faithful, affectionate, and valuable pastor; and far be it from me to make light of your loss. All those churches who knew him only by occasional visits, all good men, who had any opportunity of appreciating his worth, must sympathize with you; while they grieve to think that they themselves, who saw his face so seldom, shall see it no more. His brethren in the ministry, who enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of his friendship and correspondence, feel a loss that they will ever deplore. How then must you regret his removal, who were, many of you, the seals of his ministry; who, all of you, hoped long to enjoy his constant labours; and for whose welfare he laid himself out with such unremitting assiduity? The pastor, whose absence you mourn, possessed such an assemblage of lovely graces, and acceptable qualifications, as are found united but seldom, even

in truly Christian ministers. He had the firmest attachment to evangelical truth, and the most constant regard to practical godliness; he united remarkable soundness of judgment, with uncommon warmth of affections. I never saw, at least in one of his years, such active, ardent zeal, conjoined with such gentleness, modesty, and deep humility; so much of the little child, and so much of the evangelist, I can scarcely forbear saying, of the apostle of Jesus Christ. I know not how to flatter you, with the hope of obtaining another minister; or myself, with the expectation of finding another friend, in whom *all* these charming qualities shall be found, in an *equal* degree. He was indeed, "a burning and a shining light, and we rejoiced in his light for a season;" but now we must lament, that he shines no more upon earth; though we doubt not that he shines like the sun, in the kingdom of his Father.

While he abode among us, his affections were evidently and eminently in heaven; his work, his family, and his people, were the only objects of regard, which made him willing to forego the bliss of the eternal world: and when he perceived that it was the Lord's will that he should depart, your welfare was still his chief concern. For your consolation and benefit he wished this passage to be considered at his funeral. He once alluded to another scripture, but laying that aside, lest it should occasion too much being said of himself, he fixed upon this; remarking, "If *he* comes to you, all will be well—you need not regret *my* removal." So you see, brethren, the design of your dear pastor was to encourage you to claim a share in the promised presence of the Redeemer; which he knew extended to all his churches, and to every individual believer. He perceived that he was going to leave you; *he* could not promise to come again to you, though it was his great consolation to hope that you, in succession, will follow him; and meanwhile, the presence of his great Master, as to his divine nature, and the increasing influence of his Spirit, would be a sufficient compensation for any loss you could sustain by his departure. The spiritual presence of Christ could make up for the want of his bodily presence, to those who knew what it was to enjoy the latter; it must then assuredly be sufficient to supply the absence of any under-shepherd. With this thought my dear brother consoled

himself, in the beginning of his illness : " If," said he, in a letter written the first Lord's day that he was confined from public worship, " if I am to depart hence, to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his cause as well without me as with me; he who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially, since He himself is the chief Shepherd of souls."

Let me therefore attempt to assist you by directing your attention to the grounds on which you may safely expect the fulfilment of the promise, the magnitude of the promise itself, and the consequent obligations under which you are laid by it.

1. Consider the *ground* on which you may safely build an *expectation* that our Lord Jesus will come unto you.

Our Lord's ability to make good such a promise, must here be noticed. Not only had he an inherent power to lay down his life, and to take it up again, in consequence of which he spent forty days with his disciples, before his ascension ; but he has power to perform his standing engagements with his whole church, of being *with them alway, to the end of the world*, whenever, and wherever, *two or three are gathered together in his name;* which promises must be connected with the text to enable you to claim any part in the consolation it will administer. Some modern enthusiasts (who can believe any thing which does not imply that they are so *guilty* as to need the incarnate Son of God to make an atonement for their sins by his precious blood) have fancied that the body of Jesus, who according to them was a mere man like ourselves, ascended no higher than the atmosphere which surrounds the earth, and that he occasionally descends from thence to this globe, to visit invisibly, and one at a time, the various congregations of Christians. This idea, it has been said, " cannot possibly do us any harm ;" but, alas ! it can do us but little good. If the Saviour should thus visit all those who are called by his name, our turn to be so favoured may occur but once in a life-time ; or whether they who have invented this solution of Matt. xviii. 20, would admit us, whom they represent as irrational idolaters, to enjoy any share in his visits, I know not. Nor would it be of consequence, whether it were granted or denied; a mere man, surveying us invisibly

now and then, could impart to us no spiritual blessing. But if our great High-Priest be indeed, in the most exalted sense, the Son of God, who is "*passed through*"* these lower heavens, and is "*made higher* than the heavens," having "ascended up *far above* all heavens, that he might *fill all things*," (according to the passage which we heard explained this morning,†) and if "*all power* be given unto him, in heaven and in earth," *then*, my brethren, your faith stands upon a firm foundation. He who, when he was upon earth, as to his humanity, could speak of himself as being "in heaven," can as easily grant you the presence of his Divinity, now his human nature is in the world above.

Let the extent of his regard to his church, be also remembered. In his last prayer with his disciples, he prayed not alone for them who were present, but for all who should believe through their word. And "he ever liveth, to make intercession for‡ all them, who come unto God by him." In every age hath his church been the object of his gracious regard: and he has fulfilled the promise

* Διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους. Heb. iv. 14, vii. 26. Eph. iv. 9, 10.

† By brother West of Wantage.

‡ Εντυγχανειν υπερ αυτων. Heb. viii. 25. Mr. Belsham, a professed advocate of rational religion, supposes that *the writers* of the New Testament *themselves, annexed no very distinct idea to the phrase* of Christ's making intercession, because εντυγχανειν he observes, expresses any interference of one person *for* or *against* another. It is true, that in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul mentions Christ's *making intercession* FOR us, viii. 34; and Elijah's *making intercession* AGAINST *Israel*, xi. 42. And he uses this same verb, but with different prepositions, in both places. But can any ambiguity arise from employing one word, with prepositions of opposite import, to denote opposite things? Will not the things thus opposed rather illustrate each other? Εντυγχανειν ΥΠΕΡ, is to plead *for*, and Εντυγχανειν ΚΑΤΑ, to plead *against*; the latter phrase is repeatedly used in Maccabees to express the act of *complaining against, bringing an accusation against, making complaint against* a person or persons. 1 Mac. viii. 32. x. 61, 63. xi. 25. And as this is the part of a prosecutor or accuser, so the former is the part of an advocate, patron, or intercessor. The Jews have adopted the two Greek terms Παρακλητος, an *advocate*, used 1 John, ii. 1, and Κατηγορος, an *accuser*, used Rev. xii. 10, and employ both in the Chaldee paraphrase of Job xxxiii. 23. "an Angel is prepared, one *advocate* (ברקליטא) among a thousand *accusers*. (קטיגורוא)." See Outram de Sacrificiis. Lib. II. Cap. VII.

which he made in the days of Zechariah, "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined unto Jehovah, in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah God of Hosts hath sent me unto thee."—To the primitive church under all the pagan persecutions, was this promise fulfilled; to the Waldenses and Albigenses in the darkest times of popery; to the first reformers from antichristian error, and to their faithful successors; whether conformists or non-conformists; in this Island, on the continent of Europe, or in the wilds of North America. And at this day, wherever two or three assemble in his name, at Birmingham or at Bristol, in London or at Edinburgh, in Old Holland or in New Holland, at Mudnabatty or at Otaheite, at the Cape of Good Hope or in Kentucky, there may our distant brethren, as well as ourselves, expect our glorious Lord to fulfil his word, *I will come unto you.*

The *express promises* he has made, of which the text is one, and we have recited several others, forbid us to doubt of the bestowment of this invalable blessing. Jesus is the "faithful and true Witness; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In him all the promises of God are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.—He assured his servant Paul, in a season of peculiar difficulty, "*My* grace is sufficient for thee;" and the grace which could suffice for him, who accounted himself the chief of sinners, and less than the least of saints, is sufficient for us also. His strength is displayed to the greatest advantage in our weakness. O remember how it was lately displayed in the weakness, the extreme weakness, of your dear dying pastor, on whom the power of Christ so visibly rested. When his heart and flesh were failing, how did he rejoice in God his Saviour, as the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever! And is there a mourner present, so feeble, so disconsolate, so bereaved of every created source of bliss, as that this grace will not suffice for her support? Or will he, who kept his word with such "punctilious veracity" to the husband, forget his promise to the widow and the fatherless? Assuredly he will not.

Remember, my brethren, the *readiness of the Redeemer to hear and answer prayer.*—Though Paul besought him thrice upon one subject, before he received an immediate reply, the promise was fulfilled even before it was pronounced; he, like one who lived long before him, and like myriads who have since made trial of the same resource, was "strengthening with strength in his soul," before the Saviour expressly declared, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." Continue therefore, instant in prayer. Remember the apparent rebuffs encountered at first by the woman of Canaan, and how amply her faith was answered at last. Did not Jesus inculcate this maxim, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and speak a parable to illustrate and enforce that duty? Rich blessings, I trust, are still in reserve for you, in answer to the many fervent petitions, which your dear pastor offered up on your behalf, from the time of his first acquaintance with this church, and during better than nine years,* wherein he has more fully undertaken the oversight of you in the Lord. May you yourselves pray without ceasing, and plead with the Lord his own exceeding great and precious promises, which will be found to contain blessings fully proportioned to all your necessities.

It was doubtless in consequence of many comfortable *evidences*, that *God has a number of spiritual worshippers* among you, that my dear brother was encouraged to expect this declaration would be certainly fulfilled in your present circumstances. But though I gladly indulge a similar confidence, yet neither I, whose personal knowledge of you is very confined, nor he, whose acquaintance was much more intimate and general, could answer for every professor among you. From what has taken place in all the large congregations I have known, I am afraid lest the hopes of your pastor may be disappointed, as to some individuals, whom he never suspected, but whose future apostasy will indicate the superficial nature of their present profession, and ensure them a final portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. Greatly shall I rejoice, if not *one* such character should ever be found

* He was ordained August 1790.

among you ; but to render the consolation in the text more certain in its personal application, I must exhort you to examine and prove your own selves, and to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Unless you are such of whom God disapproves, Christ is in you, the hope of glory ; he dwells in your hearts by faith, and you begin to be conformed to his lovely image. You account mental nearness to God the chief good. You value communion with him above all the world. Is not this the case, my brethren? I trust you can say with the Psalmist, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Fear not, that the Lord will frustrate the desires his own Spirit has excited, or abandon that soul, whose wishes centre wholly in himself.

In the mean while, to increase the intenseness of your desires after the presence of Christ, let us proceed to consider,

2. *The magnitude of the promise.*

Has Christ said, "I will come unto you?" and have you been told to-night that his presence can make up every loss? Well may you credit the assertion, if you consider what is intended by the promise in the text.

It imports that *he will manifest to you his glory.* And O how delightful the sight! "Lord!" said Jude, "how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" This exclamation might denote partial ignorance, as well as grateful surprise : but the secret was in great measure explained, when the Spirit was poured out from on high. Then Paul observed, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ :" so that while others have "their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance which is in them, because of the blindness, or rather the *callousness*,* of their hearts ; we all with open face, beholding as in a *mirror*, the glory of the Lord,

* Δια τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδιας αυτων. Eph. iv. 18. Πωρωσις, concretio quæ in callum fit. In sacris literis πωρωσις καρδιας quum cor occaluit. *Scapula. Robertson.*

are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

If the Lord grant you his special presence, you will not only realize his essential and mediatorial glory, but be cheered also with a *lively sense of his love*. And what consolation can equal that which must result from such a source? "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," is a blessing which the apostle considered as immediately connected with being "filled with all the fullness of God;" and the bestowment of which was a proof that he is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Unless we could conceive the full *extent* of the happiness produced by the redemption of Christ throughout the whole empire of God; unless we could comprehend the *length* of eternity, in which the felicity of the saved shall be for ever increasing, as fast as God shall increase their capacity of enjoyment; unless we could measure the lowest *depths* of hell, from whence our Saviour has ransomed us, with the invaluable price of his blood; and the *height* of glory to which we shall be raised as the reward of Immanuel's obedience; it will be impossible fully to conceive the greatness of his love. However, enough may be known to convince us that his favour is better than life, and to fill us, even in the present state, amidst all our outward trials, and even our inward conflicts, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Reflect, that if Christ should come unto you, according to this gracious promise, *he will communicate unto you*, more largely, *the supply of his Spirit*. And shall not this fit you for every duty, support you under every pressure, and ensure you the victory over every spiritual enemy? Yes, my, beloved, if you enjoy much of the presence of Jesus, it will make you active for God, and excite you to every good work. You will not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. You will aim at the divine glory in every thing, even in all your civil employments. You will gladly consecrate the gain of your merchandise to the Lord, and honour him with your substance. It will rejoice your soul to think that you are "not your own," but "bought with a price," and you will feel yourselves bound to "glorify God, with your bodies, and

with your spirits, which are God's :" nor can you forbear to admit his claim to all which you possess ; for " the silver is mine and the gold is mine," saith the Lord of Hosts, and your thankful hearts must say, Amen. You will wish to inscribe on all your property, and on all your utensils, that blessed motto, *Holiness to the Lord.* The presence of Christ will inspire you with ardour, resolution, and zeal, to promote his kingdom among men. You will not let your *Lord's day Schools* decline ; nor will your contribution to the MISSION, in which you stood foremost so early, now be suffered to fall off, because that dear man is gone to glory, who first excited your attention to these good works ; but you will remember that Christ himself is with you, who walks among his golden candlesticks, to notice how their light shineth before men, to the honour of their heavenly Father. If you should meet with further trials, the presence of Jesus will suffice to support you under the cross, as it did the apostles, and primitive Christians. O brethren ! I pray you may live as seeing Him who is invisible. Remember that Christ, when upon earth, could not do more for his first disciples than he can now perform for you, by his divine presence. Ah! . . . . . if he were here, in his glorified body, . . or even in the lowly form in which he appeared in the days of his humiliation, ... if he often called upon you, ... or you could at any time resort to him, . . . or if he lodged at your house, ... or came thither as often as he visited the house of Lazarus, at Bethany ; . . . . would you not then consult him in every thing ; and always follow his good advice and fear no consequences, when you complied with his directions ? And do you believe the divinity of Christ, and act otherwise now ? O shameful inconsistency ! Look unto Jesus. *Look off*, my brethren, from all other objects ; from all false confidences, from all discouragements, from all the foaming billows, which threaten to swallow you up, *unto Jesus.* He is above looking down upon you. He is at hand, ready to assist you. See how he stretches forth his arm to support you, and keep you from sinking in the deep waters. Separate from him, you can do nothing ; but the weakest can do all things, can bear all burdens, can conquer all the hosts of hell, through Christ strengthening him.

If you are authorized to expect the presence of Christ, will he not *take you under the care of his providence.* How sweet is the idea of an omnipresent God! Not a local deity, as the gods of the heathen were supposed to be, even by their own worshippers. But a God *afar off*, as well as *at hand.* Present with his captive servants, to check the violence of the fire, and stop the mouths of lions, in favour of his exiles in Babylon, as surely as ever he had been ready to hear prayer in his temple at Jerusalem. A God in India, as well as in England. Who showed himself to be present with his servant *Pearce* in Birmingham, to make all his bed in his sickness: and was at the same time present, though we knew not where, with his servant *Ward* and his companions; whether they are still traversing the mighty ocean, or whether the *Criterion* has reached its desired haven. Perhaps, they have already met with *Carey*, and *Thomas*, and *Fountain*, and Jesus is in the midst of them, while they are praying for us in Bengal. Yes, Asia was long ago reminded, that "the eyes of JEHOVAH run to and fro throughout the whole earth, that he may show himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect towards him." And how comfortable is it to reflect, that this attribute of deity, and every other, belongs to God the Son, as well as to God the Father! The husband of the church is the God of the whole earth. Jesus has all power on earth as well as in heaven. They, therefore, who "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," shall find all things added unto them." "My God," said Paul to the Philippians, "shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." Cast on him, therefore, all your care: he careth for all his churches; and though you know not which way to look, he can find another pastor for this church, to repair the breach that death has made. He can raise up friends for the widow and the children of his departed servant; yea, he himself will be their guardian and defence. A father to the fatherless, and the patron of the widow, is God in his holy habitation; he will never fail them, nor forsake them.

Finally, The presence of Christ with his people on earth, shall *prepare* them *for the uninterrupted enjoyment of his presence in the celestial world.* He himself will be with you walking in the

way, and the foolish shall not err therein. He will guide you by his counsel, and afterwards receive you into glory. One of you after another shall follow your dear pastor, perhaps before the end of this year, and four or five next year, and so on, till you meet again in that heavenly city, where the *Lord God* Almighty and the *Lamb* are the temple of it; the glory of *God* doth enlighten it, and the *Lamb* is the light thereof; and the inhabitants drink of the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of *God* and the *Lamb;* and there shall be no more curse, but the throne of *God* and of the *Lamb* shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads; for they shall be completely like him, when they shall see him as he is. But let me once more beseech you to notice,

3. The *consequent obligations* under which you are laid.

Your Lord has said, "I will come unto you." *Believe him.* Take him at his word. Plead it before his throne of grace. Prove that you value his presence above every thing. Live under an abiding conviction, that without it, you must be comfortless, notwithstanding the presence of every temporal enjoyment; but with it, you must be happy, even under the pressure of every earthly calamity.

Let then the *expectation* that this promise will be accomplished, *moderate your sorrows*, on the present occasion, and on all others, and direct them into a proper channel. It is the presence of Christ which constitutes the perfected felicity of our dear departed friend: But Christ is really present with his church upon earth also: pray for more faith to realize that truth, and your heaven shall be begun below. He has said, "If any one love me, he will keep my words; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And what is the loss, which the enjoyment of the presence of Christ, and of his Father, cannot compensate? or, what is the affliction, under which fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, will not console you?

Let this promise enhance your *gratitude* for past mercies, and your *solicitude* to improve those which remain. It was from him, who ascended on high, after descending into the lowest parts of

the earth, and who received gifts for men,* that our dear brother received all his ministerial qualifications, as well as every Christian grace: and it was his blessing alone, which rendered him so successful, in winning souls to Christ. With him is the residue of the Spirit. He has yet blessings in store to communicate. O live on his fullness? Though your beloved pastor is gone, I trust that the benefit which many of you received from his ministry will never be lost. Ministers die, but Jesus lives; and his word endureth for ever. You have also a prospect of still enjoying his ordinances. Look up for his gracious influence to attend them, knowing that neither is he who planteth any thing, nor he who watereth; but it is God who giveth the increase.

May the promise of Christ's presence excite your concern to *prepare for his coming*. Let it excite your watchfulness against every thing, which would be offensive to your blessed Lord. Christians, is there any thing in the daily course of your behaviour, or in the management of your families, of which you would be ashamed, if Christ were now upon earth in human nature, and took up his abode with you? And can you truly believe his divinity, and not be afraid that he, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, should see such transactions? Do you not believe that he even searches the reins and the hearts? and has he not said, that all the churches shall know it? Behold, he cometh frequently, as unexpected as a thief: Blessed is he who watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

But now, without confining myself further to the immediate language of the text, give me leave to address a few words, by way of a more *general improvement* of the late afflictive providence, both to the members of the church statedly assembling in this place of worship, and the congregation and strangers present.

* See an excellent Sermon of brother Pearce's on Ephes. iv. 11. *On the duty of Churches to regard Ministers as the gift of Christ*, at Mr. Belsher's Ordination, 1796.

I address myself first to the church. You, my brethren, have, within these ten days, sustained the loss of a very affectionate and faithful pastor; a young and active, and at the same time an able and judicious, minister; who had approved himself among you for nine or ten years, and whose labours you hoped to enjoy for many years to come. But he is taken away in the midst of his usefulness, having but just completed the *thirty-third* year of his age. In such a trial, you have room to mourn. Jesus wept. And devout men made great lamentation at the death of *Stephen.*

Yet forget not to be thankful, that ever the Lord raised up such a minister, and gave you the chief benefit of his labours. It was the kindness of Providence that fixed him in this place, and continued him with you for several years. You have reason to bless God also, that he did not run in vain, nor labour in vain. Bless the Lord for giving so many seals to his ministry, and for enabling him to live so honourably, and to die so triumphantly.

And now, let each individual examine himself, how far he profited by the ministrations of this dear servant of Jesus Christ. If any of you put him out of his place, and idolized him; let such learn wisdom in future, and so account of us, as only the stewards of the mysteries of God. If any undervalued him, let them sincerely repent of that evil. And let all be concerned, that the benefit of his ministry may not die with him. Remember the interesting and important truths you professed to receive from him. Remember the affectionate and earnest exhortations, addressed to you by him, from this pulpit. Remember the consistent and lovely example which he set before you; and the evidence of the truth of religion, and the display of the faithfulness of God, which was made his supports, under his painful and protracted affliction.

Consider, beloved, your *duty to his family*, and show the sincerity of your regard for your late dear pastor, by your tender sympathy with his distressed widow, and the substantial tokens of your affection to his *five* fatherless children, whose tender years prevent them from forming any adequate conception of their unspeakable loss. May all the friends of the deceased bear them and their afflicted mother on their hearts before the Lord; re-

membering how essential a part of pure and undefiled religion it is, to pay kind attention to the orphan and the widow in their affliction; and accounting it an honour to imitate and subserve that glorious Being, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy, and who encourages the desolate widow to put her trust in him.

My dear brethren, forget not your *duty to one another* also, in this season of trial. While thus deprived of a pastor, to take the oversight of you in the Lord, watch over each other the more carefully in love. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, but stand fast in the Lord. Strengthen the hands of your *deacons*, at a time when the concerns of the church lie the heavier upon them, instead of indulging, as sometimes the case has been in other churches, a spirit of groundless jealousy, respecting those whom you yourselves have called to that office, and who have shwon a conscientious and upright regard for your welfare.

In looking out for a minister, I trust, you will be careful to seek one of the same stamp with my late dear brother; one, who will guide you in the true narrow way, and guard you from error on the right hand and on the left; who will warn you against every sentiment which would dishonour God's moral *government*, as well as faithfully oppose whatever notion would disparage the riches of his glorious *grace*. May you choose a man equally zealous against self-righteousness, and against self-indulgence; who will preach salvation by Christ alone, and insist on deliverance from the power and love of sin, as a most essential part of that salvation. May God direct you to a minister, who shall answer to the description given by Paul of himself and his fellow-labourers, "We preach Christ in you the hope of glory, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." May he be able to appeal to you, on his death-bed, in the words of the same apostle, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, so we spake, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts: not using flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of men; but we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto

you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and how unblameably we behaved ourselves among you who believe: as ye know, how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father his children, that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory." Such a protestation, I am confident, your late beloved pastor might have safely made, and I pray God his successor may be assisted to imitate the same primitive example, and find a corresponding testimony in the conscience of every unprejudiced hearer.

At the same time, let me exhort you, my brethren, to manifest *genuine Christian candour* in your choice of another minister, and in all your subsequent conduct towards him. If he should not equal his predecessor in the popularity of his talents, the readiness of his utterance, or in every amiable qualification of still higher importance, yet if his heart be evidently devoted to God, do not despise him, nor undervalue him; but pray for him, encourage him, strengthen his hands in God. Make him not an offender for a word, nor for the want of a word. And do not magnify such infirmities as are common to the best of men in this state of imperfection.

Endeavour, brethren, *to be unanimous* in your choice. Let none oppose the general vote, merely to show their consequence, or assert their liberty. Nor let others resolve upon having their own way, because they have a small majority of their mind: but endeavour to accommodate one another, as far as it is possible, without sacrificing truth or prudence. Only be sure that you seek a pastor that is a holy man of God, a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, who will naturally care for your souls.

Finally, beloved, let all be careful to walk worthy of the Lord, in the practice of all that is well pleasing in his sight. And let it appear that God, by taking your late dear minister to heaven, has drawn you nearer to heaven. Remember that Christ is now in the midst of you, and that you hope soon to be with him in his kingdom, and to live and reign with him for ever. What manner

of persons ought you then to be, in all holy conversation and godliness !

What I have said to the members of the *church*, will, for the most part, apply to such of the *stated* congregation, as are partakers of the grace of God.

But there are some who constantly attended my dear brother's ministry, who are left unconverted. O what shall I say to them ! I earnestly pray, that they who heard him in vain while alive, may hear him now he is dead, so as to be made alive themselves. For, being dead, he yet speaketh. The history which all his friends can give you, of his life, and of his death, (his blessed death !) proclaims to you the truth and excellence of the gospel. Do you not also remember that short, but most affecting address, which he made to you, the last time he ascended this pulpit, after brother Franklin of Coventry had been preaching ? Then he told some, that his highest comfort, amidst the symptoms of approaching dissolution, which he then exhibited, was the expectation of meeting them in heaven; while he forewarned others of you, that his greatest anxiety arose from his fear of being obliged to witness against you, as despisers and rejecters of the glorious Redeemer. O that the recollection of that dying warning, enforced by all his own happy experience in succeeding months of suffering and superabounding consolation, might convince you of the vast importance of true religion, of the unspeakable worth of the gospel of Christ, and of the blessedness of being interested in his great salvation, and obtaining an inheritance among them who are sanctified, through faith in him !

Many may expect, especially those who are *strangers*, to hear a *character of the deceased;* but he chose this text to avoid much being said of himself, and though I should not scruple introducing whatever might tend to honour divine grace, and to promote your edification, yet I am unable to enter into a particular biographical detail at this time. And as to his character, *those* who knew him will need not my delineation of it, to make them remember it with high esteem to their dying day ; while others might suspect me of flattery, if I said but half of what I cordially believe. One thing I will say, which I could say of very few others, though I have

known many of the excellent of the earth, that I never saw or heard of any thing respecting him, which grieved me, unless it was his inattention to his health, and that I believe was owing to a mistaken idea of his constitution. If any of you know of other faults belonging to him, be careful to shun them ; but O be sure to follow him, wherein he was a follower of Christ.

While his outward conduct was remarkably blameless and exemplary, he evidently had a deep, abiding, humbling sense of the evil of sin, of his own native depravity, and remaining sinfulness; of his absolute need of Christ as an atoning sacrifice, and the Lord his righteousness ; and of the love of the Spirit, and the importance of his work as a sanctifier.—He lived a life of faith on the incarnate Son of God, as the blessed Mediator who had loved him and given himself for him; and as Christ was all in all to him, his joy and his gain, in life and in death, so he took great delight in preaching Christ to others, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour ; he earnestly longed, had it been permitted him by Providence, to have preached Christ to the heathen, and would have been glad to have carried the tidings of salvation by his blood, to the ends of the earth.

But, instead of giving a fuller account in my own words, I will give all strangers the means of forming a just idea of the man, and of the nature of his religion, by reading some of his letters, written three of them to myself, and two to the officers of this church, at different periods of his long illness ; to which I shall add a few detached sentences, uttered nearer the close of his life, and taken down by his nearest relative.

These will tend more to your edification who know the Redeemer, and more to the conviction of those who know him not, than any studied panegyric.

May they excite all present to pray from the heart, Let me live the *life*, as well as die the *death*, of the righteous; may the *commencement* of my profession, and may my *latter end* be like his. Amen and amen.

THE FOLLOWING

LETTERS AND NARRATIVE

WERE READ BEFORE THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH OF THE SERMON.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Dec. 9, 1798.
Lord's day Evening.

My dear Brother,

After a Sabbath—such a one as I never knew before—— spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek Christian converse with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says that my stomach is become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous;—that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest, but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear, so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy,) a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compel me to a rigid observance of the doctor's rules.

This morning brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in the pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have. . . . blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship . . . the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang——but thus it is——our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice, that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, "How amiable are thy tabernacles!" yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of Righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, 'It is good to be *here*.'—Motive to resignation and gratitude also, crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after first lying in, towards the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, 'I shall never fear another trial—he that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend me from every spark!' and this confidence I long enjoyed.—But that was near *six* years ago, and I had almost forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them

for it: Or, if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my *family!* Ah, *there* I find my faith but still imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him. "His love in times past," and I may add in times *present* too, "forbids me to think, he will leave me at *last*, in trouble to sink."

Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself, how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the case, and both awake and asleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be . . . . nothing, if he please to have it so; and now my happy heart "could sing itself away to everlasting bliss."

O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the *devil!* What a mercy that I have so many dear sympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have so much dear domestic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on, (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers,) been vigorous—free from dejection! And, which I reckon among the greatest of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day, as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromsgrove; and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother, it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance, than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praise on my

behalf a faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about—till then, adieu—but let us not forget, that *this God is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven.

"S. P."

TO MR. KING.

Plymouth, April 23, 1799.

MYVERY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I HAVE the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am, by degrees, returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

I am indeed informed by my medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labours of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit; but after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The first was, Shall I live or die? The second, If I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, "It is no matter—all is well—for my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ; but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body—I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honour in the world? But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord; and if my disorder should so far weaken me as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the

Lord, that though he had chastened me sorely, yet, since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may show forth his praise in the land of the living.

I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people should be so long tried; but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we must pity and pray for one another. It is now a task for me to write at all, or this should have been longer.

"S. P."

TO MR. POPE.

"Plymouth, May 24, 1799.

I CANNOT write much—this I believe is the only letter I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever, which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought that, let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my *dear people* and *family*, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart, and be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

The doctors, however, pronounce my case very hopeful—say there is little or no danger—but that all these complaints require a *great deal of time* to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of *Him* who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to "fill my soul with joy and peace in believing." Yes, my dear friend! *now* my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation, while I rest all my hope on

the Son of God in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death, are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of Infinite Love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hands! "Oh! to grace how great a debtor!" &c.

TO DR. RYLAND.

"Birmingham, July 20, 1799.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewksbury; but the road was so rough from Tewksbury to Evesham, that it injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night (Friday) were brought safely hither, blessed be God!

I find myself getting weaker and weaker, and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at such a prospect I "cannot *complain*." No, blessed be His dear name who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice at times, with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, the most wretched, can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fullness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor, emaciated, and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor, with every earthly good about him . . . . but without a God!

I was delighted the other day, in re-perusing the Pilgrim's Progress, to observe that when *Christian* came to the top of the hill *Difficulty*, he was put to sleep in a chamber called *Peace*. Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me! said I; I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding he puts me to

sleep in the chamber of Peace *every night* . . . . True, it is often a chamber of *pain;* but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I have been labouring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely :—but what shall I say ? Alas, too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God, as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. Oh what a satisfying thought is it, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself! It was the very thing I needed ; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption ; in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue. But, Oh my dear Lord, *if* by *this death* I can most *glorify thee*, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this mean thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

A *sinless* state ! " Oh 'tis a heaven worth dying for!" I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his people, and a perfect deliverance from sin, and I want no more— I am sick of sinning—soon I shall be beyond its power. " Oh joyful hour ! Oh blest abode! I shall be near and *like* my God!" I only thought of filling one side—and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate, and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

Eternally yours in Christ,

" S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Aug. 4, 1799.
Lord's day evening.

My very dear Brother,

Still, I trust, hastening to the land "where there shall be no more curse," I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road; for we are fellow-travellers, and a little conversation will not lose me the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

It is seventeen years within about a week since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time, I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of Omnipotent Love. Ah, how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talkatives, have I seen, while my quivering heart said, "Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostasy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last."

These fears may have had their uses—may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependent on the Lord. Thus

"All that I've met has work'd for my good."

With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain—Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret, shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshly lust—perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist—surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be *holy* as *God is holy*—to have nothing but holiness in my nature—to be assured, without

a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, "It is very good." I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me ; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best, always sees something in me which he *infinitely hates*. "O wretched, wretched man that I am!" The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother! will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit!

But I must forbear—I have been very unwell all day ; but this evening God has kindly given me a respite—my fever is low and my spirits are cheerful, so I have indulged myself in unbosoming my feelings to my dear friend.

"S. P."

MEMORANDA;

Taken down occasionally by Mrs. Pearce, within four or five weeks of Mr. Pearce's death.

He once said "I have been in darkness two or three days, crying, O when wilt thou comfort me! but last night the mist was taken from me, and the Lord shone in upon my soul. O that I could but speak, I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh *glory, glory!*"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exercises of her mind, he replied, "O trust the Lord; if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation, I feel your sorrows; but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When scorching with burning fever, he said, "Hot and happy." One Lord's day morning he said, "Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be said to-day of the faithfulness of God. Though *we* are called to separate, *he* will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they, who trust in him, be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his promise. O what a lovely God! and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us nor forsake us, no never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good, but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus's hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me. O how thankful should I be for all my pains; I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O I have felt the force of those words of David, "Unless thy law, (my gracious God!) had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction." Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is!—I am in the best hands I could be in, in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt?—"Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord, and *my* dear *Lord Jesus*." Once beholding her grieving, he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost, I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again, never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing, he said, "It is all well! O what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well—If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever, and if I do not,

I shall go to sing delivering love ; so you see it will be all well.—O for more patience ! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jesus's hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When, after a restless night, Mrs. P. asked him, what she should do for him ? "You can do nothing, but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will."—After taking a medicine, he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children, but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I sin, I dishonour God by impatience ; but I would not for a thousand worlds sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him ; seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain ? My dear Jesus's sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine ; *And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine?* No, I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me ! what a mercy ! O how good a God to afford some intervals amidst so much pain ! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation."—After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower ; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God, so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer ; all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment : but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all things well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink ; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less ; O support a sinking worm ! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good ! "

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever ; "Oh no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, Then you can leave me and your dear

children with resignation, can you? He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say, Blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

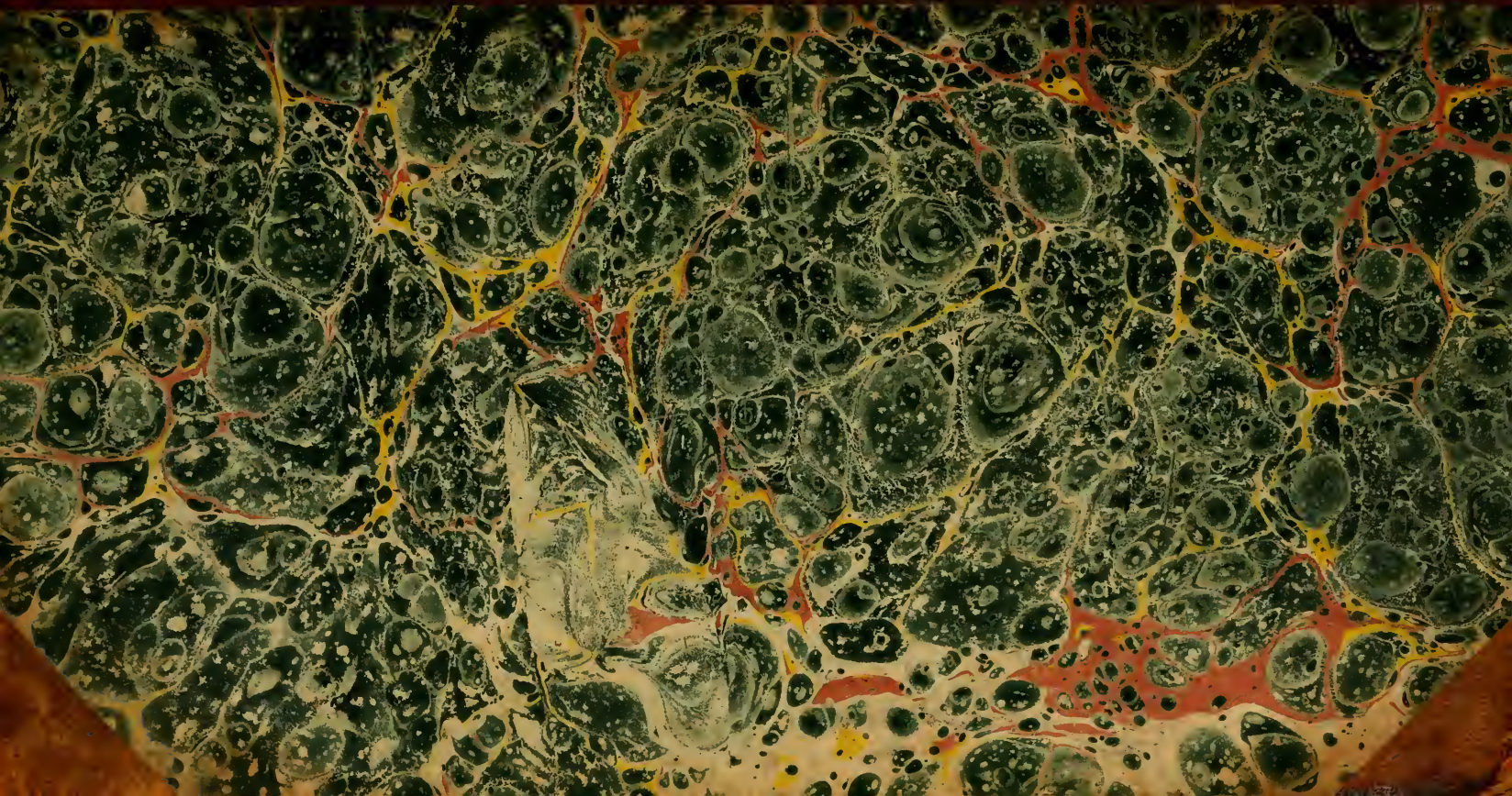
His last day, October 10, was very happy: Mrs. P. repeated this verse,

> Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
> The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food;
> Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
> And then, Oh how pleasant the conqueror's song.

He repeated with an inexpressible smile, the last line, "*The conqueror's song.*"

He said once, "Oh my dear! what shall I do? But why do I complain? He makes all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

> Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are.

"Yes," he replied, "he can; he does; I feel it."

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.